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Mission Statement

The *Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research* seeks to pursue truth and academic excellence in the field of communication by recognizing outstanding student scholarship that explores interpersonal, intercultural, organizational, and rhetorical communication. Through rigorous peer-review, the annual *Journal* strives to contribute to ongoing discussion in communication studies by publishing student papers that investigate a variety of contemporary topics and issues.

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"Nothing makes my heart flutter like a good story, especially the visual kind. The photo presented is a portrait of my younger sister, Charlsy. As soon as we stepped outside at 7pm to begin shooting, it started to rain. With the help of a flimsy umbrella and lots of dedication, we ended up with this image that looks almost effortless. I am thankful and mostly honored to have my work featured in this year's journal. I am continuously reminded that a story shared carries with it an insurmountable amount of potential."

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Introduction - The Story that Hasn't Been Told

As was said best by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her TED Talk entitled, *The Danger of a Single Story*, “When we reject a single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.” (https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story) Adichie reminds us that no narrative has just one perspective. Luke 6:20-23 also offers a lens. As part of Jesus’ pronouncement of his ministry and the Upside Down Kingdom,¹ these Beatitudes bless the poor, hungry, suffering, and downtrodden. Collectively, they give people who were previously voiceless acknowledgment and the power of narrative. Their voices matter.

However, the story that hasn’t been told is *not* just about looking at marginalized groups. Our goal with this year’s journal is to offer space for *anyone* who is part of a narrative but has been historically left out or not given voice. Consider the context of Jesus’ narrative in the Bible -- we hear the story from the disciples and people who knew the disciples or knew Jesus, but we don’t get to hear the story from Jesus’ perspective, the Roman empire’s perspective, or a Pagan perspective. How would the Bible have been different if their perspectives were also included? What would their perspectives look like? How would the story we know change? How would our own or others’ stories change? *How do we effectively communicate perspectives that have yet to be told?* This year’s journal seeks to answer these questions through the telling of new perspectives.

The research that has come out of Pepperdine University’s Communication Division this year has been remarkable! Our students have done an excellent job of telling the stories that have yet to be heard. This year’s *Journal* is a platform for new voices and offers diverse perspectives on important topics, on the story that hasn’t been told!

From the Editors-in-Chief

We are truly excited and honored to have the opportunity to work with so many brilliant students this year. The journal has been a truly collaborative effort. Each submission, whether it was selected for the *Journal* or not, has told a powerful story and expressed its voice. Although not every submission was selected for publication, we hope that each of these stories presented here and online (<https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/pjcr/>) have the same impact on you as they had on us. We are excited to include a wide range of topics. There are so many stories that have yet to be told. In this year’s *Journal* we shine the spotlight on the generational cycle of alcoholism, shame culture and “comfort women,” Third Culture Kids, ethnocentrism, sexual self esteem in relation to the church, and refugees. These submissions stood out and show off the outstanding work of the Pepperdine Communication Division. Thank you for reading, and we will see you all again next year!

Kayla Elwy & Emma Johnson, Editors-in-Chief. Pepperdine Communication Research Journal 2018

¹ The Upside Down Kingdom is a reversal of power that Jesus proclaimed in his Sermon on the Mount, favoring the powerless (i.e., weak, hungry, poor) over the more powerful of the day.

And now the telling of...

Breaking the Generational Cycle: A Point of Intervention for College Student Children of Alcoholics

Katie Walker

Assigned in COM 590: Health Communication Across the Lifespan (Dr. Lauren Amaro)

"Isn't that your fourth cup, dad?" A young girl curiously asks her father, counting the number of times he pours another glass of wine. "Why does he drink so much?" She asks herself. This inquiry is common amongst children of alcoholics (COAs) with their intrinsic desire to understand why their parent(s) depends on a drink, and why that drink often turns into two, three, and sometimes four or more. From the child's perspective, this observed behavior can be learned as a coping mechanism when stress arises in their life, thus leading to the importance of carrying out an intervention for children under such circumstances. By having COAs engage in an established and successful intervention program in order to cease the possibility of developing a reliance on alcohol themselves for means of coping in stressful situations, they will be more equipped to break the generational cycle of alcoholism.

Living in a home where a dependence on alcohol from a parent is an issue is a stressful predicament for any child. "Being raised in a household with an alcoholic parent is one of the most prevalent stressful conditions experienced by children" (Roosa, M., W. et al., 1989, p. 295) that naturally accompanies alcoholism being the most prevalent mental health problem of adults in the United States (Robins et al., 1984). Research has shown that, in comparison to their peers, COAs in particular are at an increased risk for depression, anxiety, lower self-esteem, and heavy drinking or alcoholism (Roosa, M., W. et al., 1989) in addition to developing a range of negative social and psychological outcomes, including problematic

substance use (Kumpfer 1987; Forrester 2000; Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) 2003) by the time they are college students. Moreover, when there is alcohol abuse in the family, there is also a risk of dysfunctional coping strategies that may lead children to use drinking as an adaptive behavior when they grow up (Wilson and Orford, 1978; Wolin et al., 1980; Schor, 1996). Because many COAs experience higher than usual levels of stress in their families, "one of the major difficulties that they face is determining what, if anything, they can do in a given situation to reduce the stress they experience" Roosa, M., W., Gensheimer, L., K., Short, J., L., Ayers, T., S., Shell, R., 1989, p. 296).

Each of these studies remarks call for a point of intervention, or researched activity designed to discontinue an unhealthy behavior and encourage a new and healthier one, to be implemented in aiding this issue and stopping the generational cycle of using alcohol at a young age in order to cope with stress. For this reason, existing literature pertaining to a particular point of intervention on this topic will be discussed, along with concerns of injustice and diversity inherent to the topic and spiritual and faith-based approaches on how to manage stress in a healthy way when one is a college student COA.

Review of Literature

There have been a number of organized interventions that focus on preventing COAs from following in their parent(s)' footsteps in obtaining alcoholic tendencies and behaviors. Their ability to

cope, or apply different strategies for handling specific problematic situations, specifically related to how they handle difficult circumstances related to their parents' abuse (Hansson, Runderberg, Zetterlind, Johnsson, Berglund, 2006), is the overarching skill that many interventions aim to seek in educating the COAs who go through their program(s). Because, "students who show deficiencies in coping skills are more likely to use alcohol as a coping device" (Moos et al., 1990; Kassel et al., 2000), there is a need for interventional measures to be taken. For instance, several studies have reported the importance of intervention for COAs who are young adults. "Published studies with college students as the target group indicate that brief motivational intervention leads to reduced drinking and alcohol-related problems" (Baer et al., 1992, 2001; Borsari and Carey, 2000; Larimer et al., 2001; Murphy et al., 2001), transitioning into the point of intervention that will be synthesized.

Point of Intervention

Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students, or BASICS, is an intervention program that consists of two individual sessions with some components based on motivational interviewing (Hansson, Runderberg, Zetterlind, Johnsson, Berglund, 2006), a counseling style centered around the student to elicit change in their behavior by helping them understand and resolve their ambivalence towards the topic through goal-setting. For the purpose of this particular point of intervention, motivational interviewing (employed through the BASICS program) is used in order to reduce risky alcohol consumption and negative consequences. Previous studies on BASICS have illustrated that the program can help reduce these negative consequences among college populations as well as both the quantity and frequency of alcohol use (Amaro, H., Reed, E., Rowe, E., Picci, J., Mantella, P., Prado, G., 2010). Although the program is not

specifically designed solely for student COAs, research studies have shown the effectiveness of COAs (who are prone to exhibiting alcoholic tendencies and behaviors in college settings) participating in such a program.

One study in particular by Amaro et al. in 2010, applied a BASICS intervention consisting of two sessions (each within 45 to 60 minutes in length) for recruited COA students who sought medical or mental health care through the University Health and Counseling Services at an urban university in Boston, Massachusetts. The first session focused on gathering information about the student's alcohol use by providing self-monitoring cards for the student to complete by the following interview. During the second session, the student and nurse reviewed the self-monitoring cards and the personalized feedback packet together, which included data on the student's "alcohol consumption, perceptions of other students' drinking compared to actual data, blood alcohol content, beliefs about alcohol, consequences, risk factors, and the readiness ruler," (Amaro et al., 2010, p. 358). The readiness ruler asked the students to rate their motivation, or readiness, to alter any aspect of their drinking behavior using the Readiness to Change 10-point Likert scale and to explain their reasons for change.

All of these beneficial tools were collectively reviewed at the end of the second session when students were given back their feedback packets. These encompassed the goals they had set for "reducing their drinking and drug use, strategies they had chosen to achieve these goals, and local service resources should they choose to use them in future" (Amaro et al., 2010, p. 358). Because measurements were at baseline, post-intervention, and 6-month follow-up marks, this was a longitudinal study that provided congruent results to helping college student COAs improve their risky drinking behaviors. Overall, "participant's drinking decreased between baseline and 6 months" (Amaro et al., 2010, p. 361), along

with a reported lower frequency and quantity of drinking compared to their baselines. Lastly, participants also reported a decrease in alcohol-related consequences, a decrease in distress symptoms (such as coping with stress via alcohol), and an increase in readiness to change alcohol-related behaviors (Amaro et al., 2010).

These findings of decreased consequences involving alcohol consumption after sessions of motivational interviewing parallel those from a 1998 study by Marlatt et al. who found that “high-risk drinkers who participated in the BASICS program significantly reduced both drinking problems and alcohol consumption rates.” Moreover, in relation to the readiness to change aspect of BASICS, Roberts et al. (2000) discovered that an analysis of the behavioral alterations in individual student drinking overtime has also been found to be clinically significant for student COAs who go through the program. Furthermore, in a 2012 study by Fachini et al., who found that “after approximately 12 months of follow-up, students receiving BASICS showed a significant reduction in alcohol consumption,” there was a concluded great size affected, indicating the efficacy of the program. In this same study, the application of BASICS lowered both alcohol consumption and negative consequences in college students (Fachini et al., 2012), thus supporting the goals of the program in reducing these two factors.

All of these examples each obtain slight modifications to the participant recruitment and interviewing processes as well as the program’s length. However, they demonstrate overall harmonious results in analyzing the effectiveness of the BASICS program as a successful point of intervention for COAs. Altogether, the results from these studies indicate that, like the organization of the BASICS program, “a counselor-administered motivational interview plus feedback may be an ideal first-line intervention for heavy drinking college students,” (Fachini et al., 2012).

Concerns of Injustice and Diversity

Although the BASICS program has proven to be effective in positively intervening in the lives of student COAs and helping to stop the generational cycle of alcoholism prevalent amongst families where the topic is an issue, it would not be fair to ignore any concerns of injustice and diversity inherent to the topic. First, although BASICS is a great resource for college student COAs, because of its specifically curtailed audience, the program is inaccessible to COAs who do not attend college for various reasons, such as financial instability. This concern of injustice and diversity alone builds a boundary between privilege and accessibility. Next, since BASICS is again only designed for college students, younger COAs who are not yet in college are unable to participate and thus cannot benefit from receiving the kind of feedback and personal review to best assess themselves and understand the negative consequences they can endure from using alcohol as a means for coping in stressful situations. If the program was much broader to include a younger generation of COAs, these students would be exposed to the positive effects of BASICS much earlier on their lives, holding the potential to drastically decrease their risk of developing a reliance on alcohol and breaking the generational cycle of its dependency at a younger age.

On the other hand, however, if BASICS grew bigger beyond solely reaching college students so that both young adults and younger children who do not attend college can be included in the program, such as distributing the self-monitoring cards and personalized feedback packets online, the interpersonal aspect of the intervention, which plays a big role in its successful foundation, becomes lost. On this respect, it is also possible that the advantage of BASICS is related to the idea that “in-person interventions elicit a greater commitment or social desirability from the participants, which might in turn lead to changes in drinking behavior,” (Fachini et al., 2012, p. 8). In

other words, when the two sessions of the program involve establishing a personal connection between the student participant and the nurse administering the intervention, the student will be more likely to make a change in his or her drinking behaviors because he or she does not want to let the nurse down by showing little to no improvement at the program's conclusion.

Overall, there are reasonable arguments on both sides of ensuring that this point of intervention acknowledges any concerns of injustice and diversity, which should be highly considered when addressing such matters. Correspondingly, spiritual and faith-based approaches should also be explored when seeking additional resources to compliment the BASICS program.

Spiritual and Faith-Based Approaches

As stated earlier, alcoholism is the most prevalent mental health problem of adults in the United States, making this issue relatable. Often when one can relate to something or someone, coping with the issue becomes a little easier. For many, spiritual and faith-based approaches are the best ways to find this relatability, especially on the topic of alcoholism. According to Miller (1998), "there is strong evidence that spiritual involvement is a protective factor against alcohol abuse." An example of such an approach would be a COA using the power of his or her spirituality to recognize the generational pattern of alcoholism and rely on his or her faith to break that cycle. It is

important to note that this faith is not constrained to one particular religion but rather the belief in the concept of a higher power. The main connection within spiritual and faith-based approaches is that there is a power that is greater than the individual, and that it holds the capability to help him or her with his or her daily struggles. For instance, "higher levels of spirituality are associated with improved functioning in abstinence from alcohol abuse" (Bliss, 2007, p. 16). This means that, in addition to student COAs going through the BASICS program, if they have a spiritual relation to God, or a similar deity, and have faith that they can beat the odds of enacting the same alcoholic tendencies and behaviors that their parent(s) obtains, they will most likely be more equipped to cope with stressful situations and revert from turning to alcohol to aid them.

Conclusion

While there are many existing interventions out there for COAs, this particular point of intervention is outlined specifically for college students to lower both alcohol consumption and negative consequences associated with drinking. There are acknowledged concerns of injustice and diversity inherent to the topic as well as spiritual and faith-based approaches on how to manage and cope with stress in a healthy way by having a connection with and belief in a higher power, all of which hold the possibility to help college student COAs break the generational cycle of alcoholism.

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And now the telling of...

Uncomfortable “Comfort Women” Examining Shame Culture and the Internal Conflict Between Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans Regarding the Comfort Women Issue

Janice Lee

Assigned in COM 513: Advanced Intercultural Communication (Dr. Charles Choi)

The word “comfort” is defined as freedom from pain and a state of physical and emotional well-being. However, why are “comfort women” always in a state of pain and never in a state of well-being? That is the irony of the term “comfort women.” Comfort women refers to the thousands of young girls and women taken from Asian countries, mainly Korea, to be sexual slaves for the Japanese Imperial army.

The “Comfort Women” issue regarding sexual slavery in World War II among the Japanese Imperial Army is a continuous and sensitive conflict between Japan and South Korea. To this day, it leaves a lasting impression on generations to come. Shame is the driving force of this issue. During World War II, many of the women taken felt ashamed and were shamed. Shame is universally experienced, but the nature of these experiences are influenced by culture. Between the United States, Japan and South Korea, shame culture has been very prominent. With the recent movements in the United States of #MeToo and in Japan and South Korea putting honor and respect as priorities within their culture, dealing with shame can be difficult within these nations.

This paper will discuss shame culture as the central concept describing the internal conflict between Japanese-American citizens and Korean-American citizens with the controversial comfort women issue.

Identification of Issues Japanese Occupation of Korea

The comfort women issue began in the midst of World War II. Korea was under Japanese occupation for nearly 35 years from 1910 to 1945.

Although in theory, as citizens under the Japanese empire Koreans should have been treated the same as Japanese citizens, the Japanese empire made a valiant effort to expunge as many aspects of Korean culture. As F. A. McKenzie (n.d., 145), who lived in Korea during the Japanese occupation, recalls:

It became more and more clear, however, that the aim of the Japanese was nothing else than the entire absorption of the country and the destruction of every trace of Korean nationality. One of the most influential Japanese in Korea put this quite frankly to me... The Korean people will be absorbed in the Japanese. They will talk our language, live our life, and be an integral part of us. (p. 145)

The Japanese empire forced the Korean people to speak Japanese, adopt Japanese names and assimilate into Japanese culture while leaving theirs behind. With Japan having a tight grip on the Korean peninsula, access to obedient young girls and women was fairly easy.

Comfort Women

“Comfort women” is a term used to describe those women who were mobilized by the Japanese army for sexual slavery during World War II. With Japanese occupation over Korea, Korea had no power to stop sexual slavery. It has long been one of the thorniest issues in Japan-Korea relations. Still to this day, the current administration of South Korea is not happy with how the Japanese government has dealt with this issue. It wasn’t until 2015 that Japan and the

former administration of South Korea negotiated a bilateral agreement to bring the comfort issue to an end. However, even this agreement did not suffice with the Korean people or the new administration which will be discussed later.

"The Rape of Nanking" is known to have started the comfort women movement. As the Japanese military moved across Asia for territorial gain, widespread atrocities were committed by its soldiers and officers. In 1937, the city of Nanking was invaded and destroyed by Japanese forces. A large scale of young women and girls were raped and the general population was treated horribly. This attracted international attention. The press reports of this incident reached Emperor Hirohito who was appalled by the negative image that the Imperial Army was creating. In order to regain and restore honor and stop the condemnation of Japan, "comfort stations" were created. These comfort stations would provide Japanese soldiers the "pleasure" they so needed. Since licensed prostitution existed during this time, comfort stations in Japan existed since 1932. Japanese soldiers called them whore houses or brothels. However, after the "Rape of Nanking," military regulations turned comfort stations into facilities for sexual slavery (Argibay, 2003).

Although many comfort women were from Japan and other parts of Southeast Asia, a large percentage of comfort women were taken, abducted, or tricked, from Korea. Many young women were promised jobs in factories so they could receive money for their families. Lee Ok-seon, a survivor, was running an errand for her parents when a group of uniformed men attacked and took her to a comfort station. She was 14 years old. She described the comfort stations as "not a place for humans" (Blakemore, 2018).

In 1992, Professor Yoshiaki Yoshimi uncovered an important Japanese military document that described the recruitment of comfort women. It states: "'You are hereby notified of the order [of the Minister of War] to carry out this as with the utmost regard for preserving the honor of the army and for avoiding social problems.'" The most important issue to the Japanese forces was "preserving the honor of the army." In this document, it does not state the need

for a woman's consent or the age limit. In other words, minors could also be recruited (Blakemore, 2018).

There were three main ways that the Japanese recruited women. One was deception. Since Korea was a colony of Japan, many areas of the country were very poor. Japan had taken control of the sources that produced food. As a result, many young women and girls started working at an early age to provide for their families. This led recruiters to trick women and promised them better jobs as nurses, waitresses, or maids that came with a salary to help their families. Recruiters would also mention comfort stations, but describe them as "comfort services" where Korean women assumed that they would be visiting wounded soldiers and try to make them happy. Therefore, many Korean women enlisted in this service on the basis of misrepresentation (Blakemore, 2018).

Secondly, girls and young women were purchased from their families as indentured servants. According to a document by The Southeast Asia Translation and Interrogation Center (SEATIC), the Japanese manager of a comfort station in Burma purchased Korean women for 300 to 1000 yen based on their appearance, age and characters. After purchase, the women became his sole property. The United States Office of War Information Report on debt bondage states that the women bought for comfort stations could not leave the comfort stations even after their term finished. On these terms, many comfort women never left and about 90% of these women did not survive after the war (Blakemore, 2018).

Third, the Japanese army forcibly abducted women and girls. Like Lee Ok-seon's experience, many women and girls were kidnapped from their homes. At times, the Japanese military would use fear to take girls. They would tell the heads of small villages to gather girls of a certain age and transfer them to Japanese forces for "work." If some women refused, the Japanese military threatened to "destroy the village, kill the elders and children, and commit other violent measures" (Blakemore, 2018).

Other measures would include using

civilian internment camps and recruiting girls from there. Jan Ruff O’Herne, who was in one of those camps with her mother and sisters, told the Tokyo Tribunal 2000 that a group of Japanese soldiers and a high ranking official ordered women aging between 17 and 28 years old to be inspected. They would then select several girls and women and take them away to comfort stations despite resistance. If a woman was suspected of having a relationship with members of the resistance force or being part of the resistance force, she would be taken to comfort stations. This threat shows that comfort stations were portrayed and viewed as a source of punishment (Blakemore, 2018).

Japan had four main reasons for setting up comfort stations. First, and one of the main reasons, was the desire to restore the image of the Japanese army. Japan believed that comfort stations that were military-controlled would prevent another “Rape of Nanking” incident. Second, comfort stations were put in place to prevent anti-Japanese sentiment among local residents and in occupied territories. Third, Japan hoped to reduce the army’s medical expenses and keep its military personnel healthier. Many sexually transmitted diseases were common among the army due to access to brothels. Therefore, all comfort stations included medical examinations of the women by Japanese military doctors reducing the risk of diseases. Fourth, women who were kept in Japanese comfort stations were isolated. This was very important to the Japanese army because before military- controlled comfort stations, soldiers would go to brothels which led them to believe that spies could hide there. As a result, many women were trafficked from distant countries and would not understand the local language (Argibay, 2003).

The comfort women movement provides a plethora of legal, ethical, and international issues. At the start to World War II, several treaties went into effect that established slavery as an international crime and that forced sex was a form of slavery. Comfort stations, therefore, violated international law. Many of the comfort women survivors have passed away; however, those who are still thriving are finally using their silenced voice to share their testimonies. These

women promote the need to focus on human trafficking and women’s rights. They also emphasize that sexual slavery is a violation of human rights and therefore should be acknowledged by the entire international community.

Stakeholder’s Perspective Korean-Americans

Although the Comfort Women issue is a conflict that occurred during World War II between Japan and South Korea, the stakeholders in this case are Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans. Many of these people are still affected by this issue. A lot of Korean-Americans empathize with comfort women victims. Korean culture is highly influenced by honor and respect and the issue of comfort women brought shame amongst many Koreans during World War II. Therefore, many citizens now are stepping up to fight this feeling of shame. There are many many Korean advocacy groups lead by Korean Americans. The Comfort Women Justice Coalition (CWJC) in California is prominent and well known. The Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues (WCCW) in Washington D.C. has had a big role in the local governments in Virginia and also the Korean-American community. The Women’s Human Rights Education Institute has also worked with local governments and educational organizations in the United States and Canada to promote the awareness of comfort women.

In 2007, a U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 121 (H.Res.121) was passed which called on Japan to acknowledge and apologize for the use of comfort women. Active Korean Americans were the main reasons why this resolution was passed. This same group of Korean Americans were disappointed in Japan’s failure to provide an apology and reparations; therefore, in 2010 the Korean American Civic Empowerment started the first comfort women memorial on public land in the United States. Since then there have been grassroots movement and comfort women memorials spread throughout California, Georgia, New York, Virginia and two locations in New Jersey. This movement of passing the H.Res.121 in 2007 is an active commitment among Korean American activists to spread the word

about this issue and emphasize that this is not only an issue for Korean Americans, but also a human rights and women's rights issues across ethnic groups. According to Grace Han Wolf, honorary co-chair of the Comfort Women Memorial Peace Garden in Fairfax, Virginia states that these memorials are "not just for Korean Americans or Asian Americans, but for all" (McCarthy, 2017). These memorials have been used to support local governments and spread the awareness of human trafficking.

Korean-Americans have increasingly become politically powerful in the United States. The first memorial was constructed in Palisades Park, New Jersey in 2010. The Comfort Women Memorial Peace Garden in Fairfax County, Virginia is an example of private-publics partnerships. It was funded and maintained by the Washington coalition of Comfort Women Issues (WCCW), a non-governmental organization founded in 1992 for the purpose of educating Americans and seeking an apology from the Japanese government. The WCCW approached the local government of Fairfax County and created a natural relationship (McCarthy, 2014).

Japanese-Americans

With activism and the spread of memorials, Japanese-Americans have a mixed view on the comfort women issue. Many Japanese-Americans have voiced opposition to memorials popping up throughout the United States. San Francisco was the first major U.S. city to plan a tribute to the comfort women. San Francisco's monument was an attempt to encourage education about trafficking of women. Seiko Fujimoto has been living in the city's Japantown since moving to the United States about 40 years ago, stated that she does not understand why the city has to destroy the relationship of coexistence among Japanese, Chinese and Korean ethnic groups (Horikoshi). Because San Francisco is a major U.S. city, the implications that the statue has is different compared to other smaller cities that also have monuments.

Since 1957, San Francisco and Osaka have been sister cities. In 2017, a memorial for comfort women was established in St. Mary's square in San

Francisco. The statue has three young women holding hands on a pedestal representing girls from Korea, China and the Philippines. Next to them is Korean activist Kim Hak-sun. According to Julie Tang, a retired California Superior Court judge and co-chairwoman of the Comfort Women Justice Coalition, the memorial meant to commemorate the tens of thousands of young girls and women in the comfort women system and was intended to emphasize the issue of women's freedom from sexual violence. After San Francisco mayor, Edwin M. Lee, signed a resolution to turn the statue into a city monument, the mayor of Osaka, Hirofumi Yoshimura, said he will cut ties with San Francisco. Yoshimura stated that its relationship of trust with San Francisco has been completely ruined (Horikoshi, n.d.). This further signals how the issue of comfort women is still a very sensitive topic in Japan.

Japanese-Americans living in San Francisco ask why the city needs a memorial for comfort women. Many of them protested against the installation of a memorial. According to populist figure Toru Hashimoto in a letter to Edwin M. Lee, he does not intend to defend the issue of comfort women now nor in the future (Fortin, 2017). Many Japanese Americans think it is unfair that the memorials portray a one sided story. They accuse other countries of having military brothels for soldiers during wartime as well and do not think Japan should be singled out. However, San Francisco is known for many immigrants with different backgrounds and therefore this monument represents the human rights for all. In Atlanta, when the Atlanta Comfort Women Task Force constructed their own comfort women memorial, private citizens and Japanese government-funded news groups opposed the construction and sent many emails to every major donor (Fortin, 2017). Many of these Japanese-Americans in opposition possess a traditional perspective in Japanese shame culture.

Many other Japanese-Americans; however, are in support of the memorial. In fact, the memorial in San Francisco was pushed by Chinese-Americans, some Japanese-Americans and Filipino-Americans. These Japanese-Americans focus on the importance of what the memorial

says. Women's rights and human rights are core values and reasons why many memorials are put up in the first place (Japanese Americans & Japanese Speak in Support of 'Comfort Women' Memorial in San Francisco, 2017). Japanese-Americans in support of this memorial want Japan to acknowledge its mistake during the war. It is more of a modern approach to Japanese shame culture. U.S. Congressman, Mike Honda, prominent figure amongst comfort women supporters.

Being a third generation Japanese-American, Honda sponsored the 2007 House of Representatives Resolution 121 that called Japan to acknowledge the use of sexual slaves.

Cultural Concept: Shame Culture

The idea of shame is the core cultural concept regarding this issue. Japanese, Korean and American culture all value and handle shame differently. For example, Japanese culture treasures honor and respect of an individual. As a result, sometimes Japanese people revert to hiding the issue that bring on shame. Therefore, since this comfort women issue brings intense shame to Japan and the government, the government refused to acknowledge the use of sexual slavery until the late 1990s. Japanese and Korean culture are also harmonious culture; therefore, do not want the international community to view their cultures negatively.

The term "shame culture" was coined by Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist that believed in cultural relativism, who observed Japanese culture during World War II (Benedict, n.d.). Shame culture is defined as a society in which the conformity of behavior is maintained through the fear of being shamed. According to Ruth Benedict, shame is becoming "an increasingly heavy burden in the United States" (The Rise of Shame in America, 2017). Recently the #MeToo movement has generated thousands of responses from citizens and celebrities. Shame culture can also relate to the communication concept of "saving face" which is a core social value in Asian cultures like Japan and Korea. Saving face is defined as a strategy to avoid humiliation or embarrassment and to maintain honor and dignity.

Shame is very prominent in Japanese

culture. Japanese culture highly values honor and respect. Relationships between people in Japan are greatly affected by duty and obligation. In other words, duty-based relationships focuses on what other people think or believe and has a more powerful impact on behavior than what the individual think or believes. In the 11th and 14th centuries, "Bushido," which means 'Way of the Warrior,' was developed in Japan. This was a code of conduct that Japanese warriors, the samurai, followed. The samurai's duty was to maintain their dignity and honor. If a samurai lost his honor, then the only way to preserve it was through "harakiri". Which is killing oneself in a painful, yet fearlessly heroic way, to sustain honor and eradicate shame (McCann, n.d.). Amongst Japanese Americans, the desire to preserve honor and avoid shame is highly valued. The bombing of Pearl Harbor during World War II brought shame to many Japanese Americans. Intense racism and discrimination was brought upon Japanese Americans by some other Americans. Young second generation Japanese in the U.S. (Nisei), were eager to fight against Japan to remove the shame caused by Pearl Harbor and bring honor to their Japanese community in the U.S. by proving their loyalty to their country (Kent, 1992). According to Ruth Benedict, shame is used to describe the pattern of Japanese society. In other words, the pattern of shame is used to define the bond that gives Japanese society its characteristic of the idea of one knowing one's proper place (Lebra, 1983). The core of this behavior goes back to allegiance to the Japanese emperor. Japanese people are taught at an early age to obey the rules of society and are cautious to act according to rule of different situations. In contrast to Western or American cultural ideal, where a man sticks to his principles no matter what and does not change his behavior to compromise the situation, the Japanese man adapts his behavior according to the people around him and situation. As a result, a man who can adjust his behavior easily is praised and respected and is known as "a man who knows shame" (Kent, 1992). Sakuta Kei'ichi, an expert on Japanese shame culture, states that Japanese behavior on shame depends on private shame or

embarrassment. Private shame is focused on the self-image and identity. This becomes a medium to which public shame is translated into guilt. He explains how shame is rooted in the “standards set for measuring inferiority-superiority” (Kent, 1992), which is associated with the ego ideal and based on norms governing good and bad associated with the superego. Sakuta stresses the sensitivity the Japanese feel to the exposure of the self due to an acute awareness of the self because there is always the attention or gaze of others. The idea of the ‘gaze of others’ can be traced far back in Japanese history comparing the behaviors of the differing classes that existed back in that time.

Another alternative to dealing with shame in Japanese culture is to hide it or replace the cause with something else. Japan’s ultimate goal is to preserve the image of the country; therefore, hiding shame has been instilled in Japanese culture for centuries. Inoue Tadashi, a social psychologist, gives a definition to personal shame which is caused when one compares one’s ego-ideal with one’s real self and feels inferior in comparison (Kent, 1992). South Korea is no exception to shame culture. Collectively, South Koreans suffer from the fear of losing face, *chemyeon* in Korean. Like Japan, Korean culture widely values one’s honor. If one’s actions brings shame to oneself, then it brings shame to the public as well. For example, Cho Hyun-ah, the center of the “nut rage scandal” brought shame to herself, the country, and therefore the Korean people. The nut rage scandal, also known as *nutgate*, involved a Korean Air executive assaulting a flight attendant. Like Japan, Korea is no stranger to hiding the shame. There were cover ups that were made so the news would not get out. South Koreans put a great amount of value on how others view themselves. The importance of reputation is based on the idea of the self where the self manages the reputation in anticipation of criticisms by others (Lee, 1999). The beauty standards in South Korea plays a huge role in today’s society of shame. There are expectations to be met by South Korean women, especially, of the way they look. Some standards include: being skinny, pale, having a double eyelid and a high nose bridge. It is normal to get plastic surgery done

at a young age because of societal pressures.

However, in modern Korean society, the feeling of shame is associated with the lack of an obedience-oriented value system. Nowadays, in order to enhance one’s competence, education has become the first priority. Koreans also associate shame with material objects. The more successful one is the more material items one will have. Therefore, the statues that are getting erected in different U.S. cities can symbolize success because it is a tangible thing that Korean-Americans successfully put up (Lee, 1999). In recent years, shame culture in America has grown. With the movements of #MeToo and other sexual assault headlines, America’s shame culture is growing rapidly. Former President Bill Clinton is an example of a prominent figure who avoided the truth and eventually had to admit his shame. Social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram also promote shaming like ‘fat-shaming.’ However, a lingerie brand, Aerie, created a platform called Aerie real in response to fat shaming. They use celebrities and plus size models to promote their brand that no retouching has happened on any of the pictures of the models.

On September 2017, the statue revealed in San Francisco that commemorated comfort women has coincided with the growth of the #MeToo movement in the United States. More and more victims of the comfort women movement have come forward to speak out and tell their stories after decades of crimes were committed against them. According to Julie Tang, former California Superior Court judge and co-chairwoman of the CWJC, the comfort women survivors, who now average the age of 95, are the mothers of the #MeToo movement. As they speak up 50 years later it inspires modern day women to talk about their own suffering of rape and sexual assaults (Westfall, 2018).

Masculinity

Beside shame culture, another interesting cultural aspect to touch upon is the idea of masculinity. The issue of comfort women reveals the culture of masculinity. In patriarchal societies like Japan and Korea, a naturalized masculinist sexual culture exists. Japanese people believe that

men have biologically based sexual “needs” that must be satisfied by the female body.

This cultural belief is called by the author “normative heterosexual masculinity” which is a component of an underlying hegemonic or social practice that constructs the idea of masculinity and femininity and gendered power relations between men and women in a patriarchy. In Japanese and Korean societies, this idea of heterosexual masculinity encompasses the traditional institutions of professional women entertainers who were formally trained in the arts, theater, dance and music to entertain male clients. As a result, with the existence of a state-regulated system of prostitution, the idea of the rule of male sex right, the right of men to have access to commerce and public sex, summarizes the viewpoint of Japanese culture on this issue (Soh).

Call to Action

The issue of comfort women impacts Japan, South Korea and the United States. With Japan and South Korea being the key allies for the United States against the current North Korean crisis, it is important that their relationship is kept peaceful. Actions have been made to end the comfort women issue. In 2015, Japan and South Korea had created a bilateral agreement on the comfort women issue. Under this agreement, the Japanese government made a one-time contribution to a South Korean government foundation that would carry out projects to tend the needs of survivors of the comfort system. However, the new administration under Moon Jae-in, had discovered that this agreement was “seriously flawed” in that it did not conduct direct hearings from comfort women survivors; therefore, the agreement should be renegotiated. This statement sparked a strong reaction from Tokyo. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono issued a statement which included a strict warning that if Seoul decided to attempt to renegotiate, Japan-South Korea relations would be “unmanageable.” As a result, earlier this year the Korean government decided to keep the 2015 agreement (Tatsumi, 2018).

Because this issue is very sensitive to Japan, South Korea, and Japanese/Korean-Ameri-

can citizens, it is tricky to think of an action plan. With that said, educating Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans of both sides of the issue can be very impactful. Many Korean-Americans do not pay attention to the Japanese argument and seeing the opposite perspective can open the eyes of many. Another recommendation is learning how to embrace the power of shame.

Shame is a powerful emotion that can be used as a weapon. However, if teaching Japanese-Americans, Japan, Korean-Americans, and South Korea to embrace the power of shame can be even more powerful. Embracing shame means to acknowledging an act of wrongdoing. Once one recognizes one’s wrongdoing, one can then move on to forgiveness or learn not to do it again. Although it might be hard to change the values of a culture, shame can be carefully nurtured by accountability and forgiveness. This issue has created a burden among three countries since the end of World War II. Learning how to forgive and embrace the shame can be used to move past this issue and focus on prioritizing current ones like North Korea. To be human, it is normal to feel shame and people should not be ashamed to be human. It is like teaching our children that mistakes will eventually lead to success. Shame does the same. It prevents societies from doing wrong again if it is acknowledged.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the issue of “comfort women” has been the most controversial topic between Japan and South Korea. Korean-Americans and Japanese-Americans are the main stakeholders in this case. Even though this issue happened over 50 years ago, it affects the generations of people that are of Korean and Japanese descent. Many organizations across the United States have successfully pushed for memorials and statues to commemorate this issue. As a result, there have been many backlashes from Japanese-Americans and also the Japanese government, including cutting ties off with San Francisco. This issue is driven by the culture of shame. Japanese, Korean and American culture all experience shame. With Japan and South Korea

putting emphasis on honor, respect and obedience, one way to get rid of shame is by hiding it. That is why the Japanese government has not acknowledged this issue until the late 1990s. American culture is now emphasizing shame with the #MeToo movement. It inspires women to come forward and use their voice to tell a powerful story instead of being silenced. However, learning how to embrace shame can help move on past this issue. Education is critical in providing a different perspective. Even though the 2015 agreement

between Japan and South Korea did not satisfy the Korean people, it is one step to resolving this issue. Hopefully, Japan and South Korea can put this issue to rest and move on to current situations. This can then influence Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans to also move on and continue a peaceful relationship. The comfort women issue is not exclusive to just Japanese-Americans and Korean-Americans, but to women across all ethnic group. It is a matter of women's rights and human rights.

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An Application of the Communication Theory of Identity: Third Culture Kids

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Assigned in COM 513: Advanced Intercultural Communication (Dr. Charles Choi)

Introduction

In the age of globalization, technological and transportational advancements have greatly shaped the infrastructure of today's society. From traveling leisurely to expanding a company to a new continent, people are more geographically mobile. In turn, this has contributed to the growing formation of a "global village" and has greatly impacted individuals on a socio-cultural scale. This increase of geographical mobility has led to family relocations to new countries. Reasons include occupational responsibilities, entrepreneurship, military relocation, and religious missions. Cultural identities and boundaries, which were once simplified and discrete, are now obscured. A phenomenon that encapsulates the rise of these convoluted cultural identities is Third Culture Kid (TCK)—a true product of globalization. As global interconnectedness continues to increase, the phenomenon of the TCK is only expected to grow in prevalence. As such, this phenomenon warrants a research proposal as a means to better understand this growing population as it counteracts the norm of individuals who have a single national identity.

A TCK is defined as an individual who has spent his/her developmental years in a culture apart from his/her parents. Through this multicultural experience, a hybrid identity of a home culture (parent's) and host culture is negotiated into a "Third Culture" (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). As most TCKs have lived in more than one host country, their "Third Culture" is a compilation of the various cultures which they were once a part of. Through the dynamic and fluid cultural experiences of TCKs, as fueled by communication, identity negotiation is a

constant process that is required of TCKs.

Considering the diverse interactions with people from different cultural environments, identity and self concepts are formed through interpersonal communication. Furthermore, communication is used intrapersonally as the TCK processes his/her own personal identity. Last, identity negotiation also occurs on a larger communal scale through organizational communication. To better understand the complexities of the TCK experience, the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) will be used as a theoretical framework. This is because the TCK identity is multifaceted in nature, thus, it requires constant negotiation between the identity gaps that CTI proposes. The next section will outline the facets of CTI and apply the framework to the TCK phenomenon.

Communication Theory of Identity

CTI proposes four layers of identity—personal, relational, enactment, and communal (Hecht, Warren, Jung, & Krieger, 2005). These theorists contended that the internalization, externalization, and social enactment of identity are perpetuated by and through communication. The framework of CTI has been used in various studies dealing with cultural phenomena, such as multiculturalism. In a 2012 study, Hecht uses this framework to analyze the bi-cultural identity of Jewish-American persons. This study focuses especially on the communal expression of identity, and then examines the interpenetration of this communal layer with the personal, enactment, and relational layers. The breakdown of the layers of CTI provides a structure to dive in depth into this cultural phenomenon (Hecht, 2012). Similarly, using CTI to examine the TCK experience will allow for a deeper study of the personal, relational, and

communal layers, and consequently highlight their reciprocal relationship.

In dealing with a complex reality of the “third culture,” TCKs struggle with communicating their identity completely and adequately, both to themselves and to others. CTI offers a practical and holistic framework to analyze the TCK experience. As facilitated through intrapersonal, interpersonal, and group communication, these layers interpenetrate one another as the identity is negotiated. That is, the layers are connected as they convey a singular identity and often overlap as well as contradict one another. Hecht and colleagues (2005) assert that this prevalence of identity gaps illustrates the constant tension between the layers of identity. It is in these identity gaps, or inconsistencies between the layers of identity, that TCKs will need to negotiate their identity. In respect to this, the theory highlights three layers of identity to understand the phenomenon of the TCK.

As this framework is applied to the TCK phenomenon, the most prevalent identity gap is seen between the personal layer and the relational layer. On the other hand, the commonalities between the personal layer and the communal layer serve as a means of positive identity negotiation. This paper will outline the importance of the “Third Space” as a form of positive negotiation between personal and communal layers. This is a crucial piece to identity negotiation as multicultural TCKs fail to identify with individuals of a singular home culture, which ultimately causes a significant gap between the personal and the relational layers. The next section will first explore how the multicultural hybrid identity contributes and influences the self-concept of a TCK. Second, it illustrates how identity is both negotiated and formed through relationships and subsequent relational roles. Third, it reveals how the “Third Space” is an important form of the communal layer of identity. Last, it investigates the interpenetration and identity gaps between the personal, relational, and communal layers of identity.

Literature Review

Personal Layer

The identity of a TCK is one that is ever-changing as it is intrapersonally negotiated across various cultural contexts. This can be seen through the personal layer of CTI, which refers to the individual’s “locus of identity” such as self-concept, self-cognitions, and feelings about self (Hecht et al., 2005). Whereas most individuals develop their self-concept through a single socio-cultural environment, TCKs live transient lives in which cultural change is the only constant (Lijadi & Schalkwyk 2017). Through this high mobility and cross-cultural lifestyle, which promotes intercultural negotiation in the personal layer of self, a hybrid multicultural self-concept emerges (Lijadi & Schalkwyk 2017). This multicultural background enables TCKs to adapt to a range of cultures. Yet, the lack of full immersion into a singular culture prevents them to be accepted as a local in a host country. This is problematic as TCKs fail to be fully connected to any culture and identify to multiple cultures (Moore & Barker, 2012). Thus, within the personal layer, there is tension between the ability to adapt and the inability to accept in a given a host culture.

The complex and dynamic nature of the personal layer of identity is also seen through the unique concept of home, a place that is continuous rather than discrete. TCK’s view “home” as a compilation of the places they lived in and connected with (Lijadi & Schalkwyk 2017). This directly relates to the personal layer of identity as home serves as a safe place to form a sense of belonging, which is a core element of a positive sense of self. Hence, the inability to relate to a singular home culture contributes to a major struggle for TCKs—lack of sense of belonging. As society often dictates home according to the passport country, TCKs have to succumb to the discomfort between the name of their passport country and their sense of home/s (Lijadi & Schalkwyk 2017). As such, in terms of the personal layer of identity, sense of belonging is a prominent struggle for TCKs as their sense of self is conflicted and varied.

In addition to the various attachments to different “homes”, the limited time living in each country also inhibits the TCK from fully learning the nuances of the culture. This is a major

obstacle for TCKs as identity stability is sought after in these developmental periods prior to adulthood, where one's self-concept is molded (Moore & Barker, 2012). Thus, the constant moving of TCKs ultimately impedes the critical task of identity development—both personal and cultural (Moore & Barker, 2012). To reconcile this difference, the TCK's identity and concept of home is often more relational than geographical. Therefore, through the TCK experience, the personal layer of identity involves a constant negotiation of lack of sense of belonging coupled with the concept of rootlessness.

This lack of sense of belonging that deeply defines the personal layer of the TCK experience often results in a feeling of marginalization (Fail, Walker, & Thompson, 2004). TCKs experience a spectrum of exclusion, both in their passport and host countries. This spectrum can be generalized in two groups: encapsulated marginality and constructive marginality (Fail et al, 2004). Encapsulated marginality refers to feeling like an outsider in a country of residence and is unaffected by time, language, or other external factors. Constructive marginality is a more positive and enthusiastic approach to the lack of sense of belonging, where the abilities to feel at home in several cultures and to adapt quickly to new circumstances are emphasized. These feelings of marginality, whether encapsulated or constructive, help mold a self-concept within the personal layer of identity in the specific cultural contexts that TCKs find themselves in (Fail et al, 2004).

Relational Layer

As TCKs encounter individuals from the host culture, these communication exchanges can influence the TCKs' identity—positively and negatively. The relational layer proposes that identity is mutually negotiated and jointly formed through relationships. Hecht et al. (2005) proposed three levels in which relationship is the locus of identity: outside ascriptions, relational roles, and relationships as units of identity. The first level proposes that an individual's identity is constituted in terms of the other as one modifies their identity according to the ascriptions and categorizations of others (Hecht et al., 2005).

While the personal layer emphasized avowed identities, or identities originating from the self, this relational layer brings into effect of others' views on the individual through ascribed identities (Smith & Kearney, 2016). These identities could be any label, group, or categorization that is assigned to them by others (Smith & Kearney, 2016). TCKs find that labels attributed to them, whether ethnic or cultural, are significantly formative in their view of themselves (Fail et al., 2004). This is dangerous as most categorizations are significantly incomplete and could refrain TCKs from communicating their entire identity.

Furthermore, TCKs will accommodate their descriptions of themselves, their background, and even their likes and dislikes to fit the audience's perception of their identity (Fail et al., 2004). This is due to the phenomenon of the "ascribed relational identity" where an individual develops and shapes his/her identity partially by internalizing how others view him/her (Jung & Hecht, 2004). For instance, a subgroup of TCKs called "hidden immigrants" are individuals who are assigned to a culture based on looks and accents that accord perfectly with the dominant culture (Smith, Virginia, & Kearney, 2016). Their concept of self that was crafted in the personal layer is not reinforced in the relational layer, causing a gap in their identity that needs reconciling. "Hidden immigrants" are just one example of the many identity gaps that arise between the personal and relational layers.

Moreover, the second level states that identity is formed through relational roles while the third level asserts that relationships are units of identity (Hecht et al., 2005). The second and third levels are similar as they both propose that identity is built through social labels and units in relation to others. In regards to the TCK's experience, the family is a prominent relational unit that serves as an anchor and source of stability (McLachlan, 2005). Thus, the family relationship unit is the heart of identity negotiation and interaction between the TCK and the places where they lived (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). Additionally, as TCKs negotiated new layers of identities, parents stressed on their responsibility to strengthen the family to manage relocation stress and transience

(McLachlan, 2005). Thus, it is evident that parents realize the need for TCKs to find identity through this relational unit.

Communal Layer

While a large identity gap remains between the personal and relational layers, the communal layer acts as a reconciliation of this identity gap. The communal layer is where the individual's identity is attached to a larger group identity. Often, group identities are formed through common characteristics and collective experiences as a supportive community is formed (Hecht et al., 2005). For TCKs, as illustrated through the personal and relational layers of identity, there is a lack of a constant community as change is the only constant. In respect to this, the communal layer of identity exists as part of those with similar transient experiences, which ultimately serves as a way to bridge the personal and relational identity gap. The communal layer of identity lies in the "Third Culture," as individuals with this unique multicultural upbringing can relate to one another's struggles on both personal and relational layers. (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). This "Third Culture" or "Third Space" includes expatriate communities, international schools, and churches. Out of these three examples, international schools are the most eminent example of the "Third Space" as it is where the TCK spends most of his/her time interacting with relatable individuals. Within this deterritorialized community, where staff and students surpass cultural boundaries, identity negotiation takes place (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). As TCKs return to their passport country, this "Third Space" provides a hybrid space for TCKs to create, share, and relate to meanings (McLachlan, 2005). It is through the "Third Space" where TCKs can reaffirm their multicultural identities through associations with others (Moore & Barker, 2012).

Additionally, the Third Culture community does not solely exist in an institutional form. Connecting with like-minded individuals who have experienced global mobility is another example of the "Third Space" (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). In this "cultural no-man's land", which lies in between host and home cultures, TCKs are able to relate to the shared cultural ambiguity to overcome a

society that views cultural identities as discrete forms. Lastly, the need for the "Third Space" as the communal layer of identity also pertains to the TCK's future. Researchers found that professions that involve global lifestyles will be sought after by TCKs to maintain their belonging to the "Third Culture" (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008). This can be seen as an outcome of cultural rootlessness, as change is the only constant. Through this familiarity with change, the TCK find comfort through the Third Space. Therefore, the "Third Space" is seen to be a crucial aspect of the communal layer as a form of identity negotiation.

Identity Gaps and Negotiation

The personal, relational, and communal layers of CTI are all facets of a singular expression of identity. As such, they overlap and coincide with one another. This interaction is defined as interpenetration (Hecht et al., 1993). For example, a TCK's personal identity may cause him/her to find a communal expression of identity through a TCK network, which will in turn reinforce this same personal identity. This is an example of the interpenetration between the personal and communal layers. The interpenetration of layers in CTI is pervasive and crucial to a TCK's identity (Jung & Hecht, 2004). The dynamic aspect of this complex relationship is sorted out through identity negotiation. This is an ongoing process that individuals undergo as the saliency and overall communication of each layer changes throughout different phases and struggles of life (Hecht et al., 1993). For TCKs, the identity negotiation process is unique to each cultural experience. This may cause some to deny their third culture identity entirely (Smith & Kearney, 2016), while others retreat solely into TCK communities (Grimshaw & Sears, 2008).

This complex negotiation process leaves unresolved areas of identity—coined by Hecht and colleagues as "identity gaps". These are areas in which a communicated identity in one layer is not affirmed in another layer. Because communication is imperfect, inconsistencies and thus identity gaps are unavoidable (Hecht & Jung, 2004). While these dialectical tensions are omnipresent in identity, perpetuated identity gaps

often result in anger, unresolved grief, depression, anxiety, stress, and lack of friendship (Smith & Kearney, 2016; Davis et al., 2013). For TCKs, identity gaps often occur between the personal and relational layer, due to a multicultural depth that is not understood and often is not recognized or appreciated (Smith & Kearney, 2016). An example of this is the case of the hidden immigrants, where a multicultural self-concept is not reinforced in the relational layer (Smith & Kearney, 2016). On the other hand, non-dominant groups experience labeling and othering in relationships that are inconsistent with their personal identity (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2017). While these examples are negative effects of identity gaps on the TCK experience, the dialectical tensions are a crucial part of identity Negotiation.

The focus of many studies of TCKs thus far is the resolution of these tensions, by exposing the recurring cycles of crisis and giving TCKs tools to press on in their identity negotiation processes. Some of these tools include increased education about their transition and social contexts, a platform to express their fears and concerns, and communities where they can be surrounded and understood (Smith & Kearney, 2016). However, no study has overtly used CTI as a framework for resolving these identity gaps. Moving forward, this study will seek to build off pre-existing tools and explore new ways to aid the identity negotiation process of the personal, relational, and communal layers.

Rationale

Having examined the three layers of a TCKs' identity in the literature review, it is clearly evident that identity negotiation is an ever changing process that adapts to the plethora of lived experiences. Furthermore, the identity layers are also seen to interpenetrate one another to resolve identity gaps through inter-layer identity negotiation. Through the literature review, there are several themes that emerged through the lens of CTI.

First, research showed that the TCK identity is multifaceted and ever changing as it is a reflection of the diverse intercultural experiences.

This was seen through the concept of home as a continuous place, one that is relational rather than geographical. Second, research showed how identity is formed through interactions with others. This can be a positive or negative experience depending on the invisibility of the TCK. However, through interactions with others who are unaware of this unique upbringing, there lies a large identity gap between the personal and relational layer. Third, the communal layer was seen to be the "Third Space." This is an institutional or relational space for individuals sharing similar multicultural experiences. Unlike the gap between the personal and relational layers, the personal and communal layers are more similar than different. This space functions as a safe place to reaffirm identities through common lived experiences.

The existing research on the social phenomenon of TCKs is mostly qualitative as researchers have sought to uncover the diverse narratives of TCKs. This phenomenon is relatively new as it is a product of globalization, thus, TCKs have not been researched through the application of a specific theoretical framework. By applying a communication theoretical framework like CTI, researchers will be able to breakdown the various layers of identity whilst understanding the relationship between the layers during identity negotiation. This framework will enable researchers to quantify their data through the categories of each identity layer.

This study is crucial as it will help researchers to understand the effects of globalization on a societal scale. First, it will uncover the unheard narratives of TCKs. Ranging from the number of countries lived in to the diverse geographical regions where TCKs come from, each story is unique in its own. Moreover, as today's society also sees an upward trend of interracial families, this research can also be applied to families with multicultural identities and roots.

Second, this research will serve as a means to challenge the societal norms of identifying individuals to a single culture—be it a birthplace or nationality. By understanding individuals who identify with multiple cultures, researchers will be able to identify ways in which greater society can

have a greater sense of acceptance and tolerance for such culturally ambiguous individuals. Considering the pertinence of this social phenomenon, the research question and hypothesis that will be used for this research study are seen below:

R1: How do TCKs reconcile their multifaceted layers of identities— personal, relational, and communal?

H1: Uncovering common experiences through communication on a communal and relational level will lead to the strengthening of the personal layer of identity.

Methodology

This study will seek to better understand the TCK phenomenon through the interplay of the personal, relational, and communal layers of CTI, using an interpretive approach to research. Interpretive research seeks to collect data from the subjective meanings that persons attribute to phenomena (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 2011). As seen through CTI, different TCKs negotiate their identities distinctly and at varying rates. An interpretive approach would thus be perfectly addressed as an in-depth study of this phenomenon, while allowing room for each individual to express their own lived experiences. In addition, interpretive research seeks to eliminate the researcher's bias, that will always be present at varying extents (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 2011). Therefore, an interpretive would allow for a less biased and in-depth study of the TCK phenomenon through this open-ended approach.

Study Design

The primary method through which the data will be collected will be through focus groups. This method caters to the need to collect varied, personal, and in-depth data from TCKs. To do so, the study will contain three distinct phases: an arbitrary focus group, a grouping by geographical region of host country, and a grouping by number of host countries.

The goal of this initial focus group phase will be to collect broad concepts and to begin identifying common themes relating to the

personal, relational, and communal layers of CTI. The participants will first be placed in arbitrary groups. Then, the researchers will facilitate a group discussion, aided by a guided interview format. The interview questions will be regarding host and passport cultures, personal feelings, peer relationships in the United States, and a communal sense of belonging. These questions are based off a Smith and Kearney (2016) study on TCKs and are meant to guide the interview process, but should not inhibit the organic flow of conversation. These questions are, but not limited to, the following:

- *How would you describe your identity?*
- *How would you describe your relationship with your American peers?*
- *How is this similar or different than with your host-country peers?*
- *What are your feelings surrounding the host culture?*
- *What were some challenges you faced and lessons you learned?*
- *What are your feelings surrounding the repatriation process?*
- *How are you able to express your identity?*
- *How would you describe your community in the United States?*
- *Do you have advice for TCKs who repatriate?*

The second phase of the interview process will divide TCKs among the geographical regions of the host countries they lived in. If a TCK lived in multiple cultures, he/she would join the group of the host country he/she most significantly identified with. The goal of this phase is to note the distinct struggles and nuances that may arise from a particular geographical region. While the first phase will highlight overarching themes of the TCK experience, this second phase will hone in on particular regional phenomena. In addition, creating a safe-space for TCKs to share amongst their peers may generate more genuine answers.

Finally, the third phase will divide the participants according to number of host countries they have lived in. While many would feel at home in a regional focus group, some individuals have such a great sense of rootlessness that they would

not identify with any one region or culture. The goal of phase three is to allow for these individuals to express themselves in a communal setting. This phase will also offer the opportunity to compare and contrast to phase two and see whether the most complicity and group satisfaction lies in regional or multicultural similarities. Similarly to phase two, this part of the study will be aimed at capitalizing on group dynamics to obtain the most holistic and authentic answers.

Sample

This focus group study will contain at least 50 university-aged TCKs, who are attending college in the United States, and have the United States as their passport country. In order to participate, these students must have spent at least three years in a host country during their developmental years. There will be no other requirements concerning country, reason for living abroad, or reason for repatriation; although a variety of these criteria will be expected. The sample will be gathered through reaching out to at least 3 different universities, and subsequently through snowball sampling, as many TCKs have broad networks. The goal is to reach a group of at least 50 TCKs, diverse in backgrounds, ethnicities, host-countries, and reasons for living Abroad.

Unit

As stated in the research question and the hypothesis, this study will seek to find out how TCKs reconcile their complex identities through the lens of three identity layers of CTI. It is anticipated that common experiences in the relational and communal layers will strengthen the personal layer and overall reconciliation of identity. As such, this study gathers information concerning mainly the personal layer in the first phase, and correspondingly, the relational and communal layers in the second and third phases. All throughout, however, the unit that is being measured are the experiences that have strengthened the personal, relational, and communal layers. This will lead to a greater understanding of the multifaceted TCK identity, and help the identity-reconciliation process of

these global phenomena.

Conclusion

The emerging phenomenon of Third Culture Kids and the “global village” is a direct result of globalization. As global interconnectedness continually increases, so will the number of this group of multicultural individuals, characterized by their hybrid identities of home and host cultures. Thus, it is important to build on the existing research of TCKs. To accomplish this, a theoretical framework such as the Communication Theory of Identity will be used to research this phenomenon. The proposed research question will directly investigate the relationship between three out of four layers (personal, relational, and communal) of identity during identity negotiation. This is essential as researchers will now have a formal approach to quantify their findings through the layers of identity. Researchers can uncover the importance of the “Third Space” for identity reconciliation, as proposed by the personal and communal layers of a TCK’s identity. Moreover, they can examine the impact of identity gaps as seen through the personal and relational layers. Lastly, through the focus group design, unique relationships between the layers will also be uncovered.

Through the interpenetration and identity gaps of the personal, relational, and communal layers, it is seen how identity truly is a fluid and continuous process of formation. Therefore, as revealed through the theoretical framework of the Communication Theory of Identity, the phenomenon of Third Culture Kids truly is one that is complex yet important to research in this age of globalization. By navigating the complexity of the TCK identity through CTI, the adaptation of TCKs into host cultures will be facilitated. Though this research seeks to reveal untold narratives of TCKs, by identifying the gaps of identity, a following study could be used to provide solutions to aid constructive identity negotiation. The findings of this research also surpasses the TCK phenomenon as it can also be applied to other multicultural phenomena such as interracial individuals and refugees. This will be instrumental to an age where cultural boundaries are growing to be less

significant through globalization. We hope this proposal for research with TCK offers inspiration for future research with this unique and often misunderstood identity group.

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And now the telling of...

Made in America

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Assigned in COM 513: Advanced Intercultural Communication (Dr. Choi)

Introduction

Respected universities across the nation have students participating in "Greek Life." At the beginning of each semester, it is customary for these Greek Student Life organizations to hold recruitment events. Each organization creates a theme for its recruitment period, and these themes are advertised all around the campus in hopes of catching a potential recruit's eye. A common method of "advertisement" at Pepperdine University during this period is painting "The Rock" in the center of our university's Main Campus. The third week of the Fall 2017 semester, The Rock was painted boldly in red, white, and blue, reading "Made In America," incorporating the Delta Delta Delta (Tri-Delta) Greek letters. Normally, this would have been brushed off as an ignorant microaggression, but due to the timing coinciding with the Trump administration administering the Muslim Ban and rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) legislation, it communicated strongly xenophobic beliefs. The clear America-first message the Tri-Delta group projected (whether intentionally or not) promoted the idea that people from other countries are not fit to be members of the group. This phrase ostracized the twenty-two percent of international students who identify with different nationalities and the even larger percentage of students who have family and friends who were not "Made in America." After sharing our concerns with the head of recruitment about the implications of their slogan, she justified the phrase by explaining it was "fun and more likely to draw people in."

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) allows us to understand how our respective group identifications led us to different interpretations of the "Made In America" mural. As children of

immigrants, we found a seemingly harmless tagline attacking our community and its progress. Her affiliation with a primarily White American sorority, and our affiliation with a community of people of color (POC), has shaped the way we understand our environment and ourselves. The Tri-Delta group had no issues promoting a dominant, preeminent view of America, and in turn, an inadequate, deficient view of all other countries. Americans' grandiose perceptions of and undying devotion to our country hinder our communication with people who break the status quo of "American." Using the Social Identity Theory, we analyze the pillars that hold up the "traditional" American facade, and how individuals' negative interactions with members of perceived other nationalities encourages racially discriminatory tendencies.

What is an American?

Understanding what constitutes an "American" is important in the analysis of why "traditional" American citizens treat other citizens as if they were not from America. According to Schildkraut (2007), the traditions that make up the American identity are liberal tradition, civic republican tradition, ethnocultural tradition, and incorporationism tradition. The liberal tradition, the most historically accepted tradition, creates the image of an individual that believes in economic rights, individual freedoms, and lives out the American Dream through their hard work (Schildkraut, 2007). The civic republican tradition outlines an individual who is committed in their participation to their political community (Schildkraut, 2007).

Another set of "norms," however contested, is the ethnocultural tradition, which ascribes Americans to be, "White, English-speaking

Protestants of northern European ancestry" (Schildkraut, 2007, p.599). Schildkraut (2007) makes an important note that even those who consciously reject this image of a "traditional" American still subconsciously operate under the same assumptions. Schildkraut (2007) shares the example of an American asking a fellow Asian American, "Where are you from?" because his/her physical appearance does not match the pervasive "norm" of only White being American. For the sake of this paper, we will refer to this "out-group" of non-White Anglo-Saxon American citizens as "Questioned Americans." Incorporationism tradition, newer to the American identity, states that the United States is made up of immigrants who are in the process of assimilating to American culture (Schildkraut, 2007).

These often-competing traditions have been embedded within the consciousness of all Americans regardless of ethnicity, essentially forming the image of what an American looks like; if not physically White, then engaging in the process of becoming White through hard work, political fluency, and navigating different cultures (Schildkraut, 2007). When this image does not perfectly match up with the individual in contact then the infamous question, "Where are you from?" is asked. This treatment is relevant in exploring how Americans define themselves and how that affects their treatment of others.

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is commonly linked to "organizational identification," the process of structuring one's identity based on the organizations one is involved with (Scott, 2007). SIT is related to communication in the sense that one must communicate with others to gauge how a certain group is viewed in society. By learning how a collective is portrayed, one can weigh the costs and benefits of being a member of that group and determine if s/he wants to maintain that identity. Scott (2007) refers to Hogg and Terry's pioneering depiction of SIT when he mentions that SIT is split into two main branches: categorization and self-enhancement.

Categorization

Scott (2007) defines categorization as a tool used to identify group membership and its boundaries. This tool often relies on shared social categorizations such as race, gender, age, and various other situationally accessible qualities (Hog, 2006). This cognitive differentiation is visible within the study conducted by Newman, Hartman, and Taber (2012). This study tracked encounters between English speaking Americans and non-English speaking immigrants and found that this barrier to communication elicited a sense of a cultural threat within the English-speaking individuals (Newman, Hartman, & Taber, 2012). This identity threat led to greater anti-immigration policies and gave greater support of the segregation within neighborhoods and the workplace (Newman, Hartman, & Taber, 2012). This research confirms the theory that individuals must be psychologically salient in order to effectively communicate (Hog, 2006).

Self-Enhancement

Self-enhancement, as described by Scott (2007), is the idea that members will look for traits that strengthen their in-group, and in turn, enhance the individual. If a group is first-rate, then the members within the group must also be viewed in a similar light. Negy, Jensen, and Uddin's (2003) research supports the theory that generally, when people learn more about the group they identify with, they become more ethnocentric, or see their group more positively than others. This mentality naturally occurs from judging other groups based on principles formed by their own group. Eventually, this leads to prejudice, and every difference serves as a reason to see other groups as inferior and substandard (Negy, Jensen, and Uddin, 2003). The research shows that there is a positive correlation between the amount of knowledge individuals have about their group and their ethnocentrism, self-esteem, and group-identity scores (Negy, Jensen, and Uddin, 2003).

Group Vitalities

Objective Vitalities

SIT states that an individual is always

striving for positive group identity, or high vitality, which refers to their positionality within society (Abrams & Giles, 2009). Their objective positionality, or vitality, is dependent on three categories: status, demography, and institutional support (Abrams & Giles, 2007).

Status is comprised of four factors: economic, social, sociohistorical, and language. The economic status of an individual is dependent on the “degree of control” that an individual has over his/her financial life (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2009, p. 61). Social status is based on the “degree of esteem” that a group attributes to itself (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2009, p. 61). Sociohistorical status is rooted in the degree of pride or shame in a group's history. Finally, the status of language is the degree of “prestige” that the language holds (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2009, p. 61). A group possesses high status if they have high degrees of these categories (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2009).

An elevated identity can also be a result of demography. Demography, which is the statistic of births, deaths, and marriages of the in-group, is significant in increasing group vitality because of the “notion of strength in numbers” (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2007, p. 120). The number of individuals in the in-group is relevant when it comes to levels of institutional representation. High institutional support derives from high formal and informal representation in one's homeland via the governmental, mass media, educational, religious, and cultural spheres (Abrams & Giles, 2007). More so than institutional representation, mass media has played an unparalleled role in forming vitality perceptions (Abrams & Giles, 2007). Abrams and Giles (2007) specifically highlight television's role as an influencer. Television has the power to connect with a broad audience, create a cultural narrative, and present content that an individual would otherwise have never experienced (Abrams & Giles, 2007). These constructions inform audiences on their own group vitalities (Abrams & Giles, 2007). If there is a positive correlation between representation and group identity, then the same group will attain not only higher objective vitality in representation, but also in subjective vitality (Abram, Barker, Giles, 2007, p.120).

Subjective Vitalities

Subjective vitality is an individual's personal assessment of their group's vitality in comparison to other groups' (Abram, Giles, 2007). Groups differentiate themselves by using objective vitalities to justify their subjective vitalities. For example, Koskeniemi's (2016) analysis of James Lorimer, a White lawyer in the nineteenth century who practiced “natural law,” reveals that his justification of Europeans as superior than other nationalities was solely based on his comparison of wealth and moral values.

Lorimer specifically categorized Turkey, Africa, and the Arab states into three groups: civilized, barbarian, and savage. Based off this hierarchical division, advocated for each country to abide by distinct international laws (Koskeniemi, 2016). Lorimer's motivation for pursuing this course of action was to establish European states and values as superior.

The self-enhancement portion of the SIT explains that Lorimer's need to depict Europe in the most positive light and degrade the status of non-European countries is a result of his membership with the European culture (Sets & Burke, 2000). In Lorimer's case, he used a combination of objective and subjective tools to argue his stance that European countries should be held to a different set of international rules than more “inferior” countries. The most compelling objective tool he used was the wealth of a country, similar to the modern-day GDP. Besides the “value” of a country, most of Lorimer's argument relied on subjective “evidences,” such as moral values of a society. His argument relied on the idea that a country's financial success was directly dependent on its moral values, which was not supported by any research at the time. Lorimer's case is a perfect example of how grouping people into ingroups and out-groups are detrimental to the development of a society.

Satisfaction Levels

Within SIT, satisfaction levels are commonly assessed in groups to see how content people are in their intercultural interactions. For instance, a way that Americans commonly express

their satisfaction levels is through contentious policy issues. "Language policy, immigration policy, and government spending on race-related programs" (Schildkraut, 2007, p.598) are all examples of how Americans see themselves and the (lack of) need to accommodate for Questioned Americans. Depending on the Americans' satisfaction levels with Questioned Americans, they will support policies that either benefit or hinder the rights and opportunities of Questioned Americans.

Brown (2000) reports that two major methods in which members of a group show their satisfaction levels is by leaving their group, or finding ways to change the aspect of the group that they are unsatisfied with. One example relevant to California is the section under Title VI (the Civil Rights Act) regarding language rights in hospitals. Every patient has the right to an interpreter every time they receive health care and every patient has the right to written information in their own language, as a result of pressure from local communities (OPA, 2015). In this instance, Americans were unsatisfied with their intercultural communication approach, and decided to change the situation.

Rationale

The phenomenon under analysis is Americans' willingness to communicate with fellow Americans who do not fit the dominant view of Americans. The motivation behind our experiment was to answer whether affiliation and knowledge of culture has an effect on our interactions with Questioned Americans. This lack of willingness to communicate with Americans who practice other cultures promotes the concept of "accidental racism," more commonly referred to as "microaggressions." This exists even within highly educated & "diverse" communities such as Pepperdine, as demonstrated by the "Made In America" rock design.

The liberal tradition, civic republican tradition, ethnocultural tradition, and incorporationism tradition are the main frameworks that Schildkraut (2007) uses in attempt to define what a modern-day "American" is. These four traditions create the "perfect" American as

one who attains economic success through hard work, is politically involved, is a White English-speaking Protestant who immigrated from Europe, and is quickly assimilating into American society (Schildkraut, 2007).

In his explanation of SIT, Scott (2007) splits the theory into two different sections.

Categorization is essentially the idea that people put themselves into groups where they feel they have similarities with others. These groups or "categories" are often socially constructed groups with differentiating factors such as age, gender, and race (Hogg, 2006). Self-Enhancement, the second section that Scott (2007) uses, states that people within a group will try to differentiate their group from the others as much as possible. Eventually, each differing factor between the in-group and the out-groups will be seen as sufficient criteria to devalue the out-groups. Through the lens of self-enhancement, we can easily see how an ethnocentric mentality can develop in one's mind. Ethnocentrism is simply the belief that one's group is better than all others, usually based in subjective reasoning. SIT goes further to claim that once an individual learns more about the group they identify with, their sense of ethnocentrism (pride for their own group, as well as a demeaning view of other groups) along with their individualistic self-esteems will increase (Scott, 2007).

The theme of ethnocentrism carries on into the discussion about vitalities. The Self-Enhancement idea is further developed in the understanding of the relationship between subjective and objective vitalities. Subjective vitalities are often the claims that in-groups use to support the assumption that their group is better than others. While subjective vitalities are based on standards created by the in-group, the in-groups try to validate their judgment of other groups based on "objective vitalities." Objective vitalities are composed of status, demography, and institutional support (Abrams & Giles, 2007).

Being American has been traditionally defined in ways that no longer represent the true demography of America. Americans' affiliation and perception of our country negatively affect our communication with people from different cultures

in America. An individual is always striving for positive group identity in an attempt to raise his or her own social standing. In identifying ethnocentrism as the cause, we will be able to reduce the symptoms that we see later on.

While some members of the population may not acknowledge microaggressions as a “serious” problem in our society, Schildkraut (2007) and Brown (2000), explore the concept of social satisfaction within groups. High levels of satisfaction show that a group is content with their involvement and role in a society, whereas low levels of satisfaction show that a group wants changes of their group’s communication in the society. We have developed an experiment to test two hypotheses from the research: “Those with high categorization will have lower satisfaction with the ‘Questioned American’ conversation than the stereotypical American conversation,” and subsequently, “Those with low categorization will have higher satisfaction with the ‘Questioned American’ than the stereotypical American conversation.”

Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study will be to determine whether there is a correlation between Americans’ level of national identity and their willingness to communicate with ‘Questioned Americans.’ We will implement an experimental, quantitative method approach for our research. We chose to use a quantitative study to gather data from a large population of people to see the general consensus of Americans, rather than focus on specific individual cases. This research is essential to prevent growing hostile racial tensions between Americans. We will recruit ten participants from each state and ten participants from each continent (America being excluded from the North American group). We will have a random selection of participants who fit the following criteria: eighteen years or older, fluent in English, American citizenship. From this sample, we hope to have a group of people in which all academic levels; income brackets, political parties, genders, religions, and races are represented. The people will be selected through a process called “random digit dialing” (RDD), in which we contact people

through randomly generated phone numbers with a specific area code. This cost-efficient process has the advantage of reaching people who are normally unlisted in phone books, and offers coverage a complete geographic area (Suh, 2015). After getting into contact with various people from throughout a state or continent, we will schedule times to meet them at their local libraries or public schools, to conduct our experiments.

After our sample is selected, we will have all the participants complete a survey to self-report their levels of patriotism modeled after the study by Schildkraut (2007). We will be asking our participants’ questions based on the traditions described in “What is American?” All of our questions will have a spectrum with options for participants to rate them as “Very Important,” “Somewhat Important,” or “Not Important At All.” Examples of questions that would measure the Ethnocultural traditions would be; “How important is it to be born in America in order to be a true American?”, “How important is it to be Christian in order to be a true American?”, “How important is it to have European Ancestry in order to be a true American?”, and “How important is it to be White in order to be a true American?” For the Liberalism tradition, we would ask question such as, “How important is it to respect political institutions and laws?”, “How important is it to achieve economic success through hard work?”, and “How important is freedom of speech despite ideological differences?” The Civic Republicanism tradition will be gauged through questions such as, “How important is volunteering in your community?”, “How important is it to feel American?”, “How important is it think of oneself as an American?”, and “How important is it to be informed and involved in local and national politics?”

For the Incorporationism tradition, our questions would include, “How important is it to carry on the cultural traditions of one’s ancestors, such as the language and food?”, “How important is it to respect other people’s cultural differences?”, “How important is it to blend into the larger society?”, and “How important is it to see people of all backgrounds as American?” Additional questions will include, “How important is it to be able to speak English?”, “How important

is it to speak 'traditional' English (without an accent)?", and "How important is it to have American citizenship?"

After the surveys, we would ask the participants to speak to a customer service representative (CSR) with a traditional American accent over the phone. Participants will be given the task of making a reservation at a restaurant of our selection and pre-ordering food for a party of seven. This will force the conversation to be of substantial length, and leave room for error. During this conversation, the participant will be connected to a polygraph that will monitor their physiological responses (breathing rate, pulse, blood pressure, and perspiration) to assess their levels of nervousness and frustration. The data from the polygraphs will be analyzed and reported back to us by a professional polygraphist. In order to reveal subconscious ethnocentrism this process will be repeated with another CSR whose accent would qualify him/her as a Questioned American.

After the phone conversations, the participant will be given another survey that will ask them to rate the satisfaction level of their phone call. Participants will be asked to judge the accuracy of the following claims: "CSR was well-trained," "CSR adhered to professional of conduct," "CSR acted in my best interest," Overall, I am satisfied with the CSR," "The CSR responded to my inquiries in a timely manner" and "The CSR was able to efficiently carry out my request." Our hypothesis stated in our Rationale section will be proven correct or incorrect depending on the differences in physiological responses. Increased or decreased physiological responses between the two calls combined with self-reported satisfaction surveys conducted after the call will reveal whether or not Americans treat Questioned Americans differently.

Conclusion

SIT states that an individual's sense of self stems from the vitality of the groups that they are affiliated with. As a result, individuals, and by

association, groups, are in constant negotiation with the out-groups in asserting their dominance so as to ensure their success. The Tri Delta sorority, so as to bring in greater recruits, used the sociohistorical status of "Made in America," which communicates ethnocultural traditions, to assert their dominance over the out-group, or those not "made" in America. The design of this rock and defense of its message, despite our concerns combined with the tense political climate, demonstrates the head of recruitment's low willingness to communicate with intercultural Americans. This led us to question whether there was a negative correlation between patriotism and intercultural willingness to communicate.

When we are faced with unintentional discrimination, or microaggressions, we begin to question why our opinions are viewed as less important than those of the traditional Americans. As students of color attending Pepperdine who are deeply connected to communities that have been affected by the anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric, this research has provided us with tools to identify the reasons behind microaggressions, bring about a new approach to entering intercultural conversations, and begin reconstructing what it means to be "American."

This proposed study is important because unchecked interactions with low satisfaction builds and manifests into more deeply cemented ethnocentric communication. Our experimental design will check one of the most common types of intercultural interactions and produce findings that reveal how subconsciously embedded ethnocentric traditions affect our daily interactions with others.

A large-scale example of this ethnocentric phenomenon today is the recent "White nationalist rally" incident in Charlottesville. The participants acted extremely because they felt supported by the current presidential administration and his political party. Awareness of one's affiliations with certain groups and how those groups interact with others could lead to incredible steps toward equality for all co-culture groups in America.

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And now the telling of...

Sexual Self Esteem and The Church

Rachel Yoshimura

Assigned in COM 590: Health Communication Across the Lifespan (Dr. Lauren Amaro)

The Problem

Sexual self-esteem has been defined by several scholars as an individual's "sense of self as a sexual being" and "the value one places on oneself as a sexual being" (Mayers, Heller, & Heller, 2003). This sexual sense of self can be a complex web influenced by things such as experience, external messages, and moral frameworks. In order to conceptualize the multifaceted nature of sexual self-esteem, Zeanah and Schwarz developed components of one's esteem that include:

"The ability to enjoy sex with a partner (skill/experience); personal appraisal of attractiveness to a partner (attractiveness); perception of agency in sexual acts and managing sexual thoughts and feelings (control); the congruence of sexual thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with personal moral standards (moral judgment); and congruence of sexual behavior with personal aspirations (adaptiveness)." (As cited in Abbott, Harris, & Mollen, 2016)

When one feels positively about oneself in each of these categories, one tends to have positive sexual self-esteem and places overall positive value on oneself as a sexual being. In contrast, negative sexual esteem is associated with sexual anxiety, fear, and depression (Ziaei & Ziaei, 2013).

Though positive sexual self-esteem is desirable for all, studies have shown gender discrepancies in self-reported esteem. Rosenthal, Moore, and Flynn's study (1991) conducted on 1,788 participants across 15 secondary education campuses revealed these discrepancies. Rosenthal et al.'s survey of 17 to 20 year-olds found that

males felt more confident in their "ability to assert their sexual needs" and had overall higher levels of sexual self esteem (p. 71). When it comes to the negative impact of low sexual self-esteem, women have shown to be a particularly at-risk group. A specific group of women especially vulnerable in regard to sexual self-esteem is religious women.

In their study, Abbott, Harris, and Mollen (2016) found that religious women felt negatively about their sexual self-esteem in the categories of moral judgement, control, and adaptiveness. Their findings suggested that 1) religious women are less likely to view their sexual behaviors as acceptable and "congruent with their own moral standards," 2) women who are more committed to their Catholic faith possess more negative views of their sexual selves (in contrast to less committed Catholic women), and 3) Protestant women who "endorse sexually permissive attitudes" possess poorer self-perception of their sexuality (Abbott et al., 2016, p. 1075-1076). Therefore, their study demonstrated the correlation between religious affiliations and more negative feelings of women's sexual self-esteem. Abbott et al.'s study is congruent with previous findings that religious women, with varying motivations and commitment to their religiosity, experience feelings of guilt about their sexual behaviors (Cowden & Bradshaw, 2007).

In addition to feeling conflict between one's moral standards, sexual behaviors, and identity, religious people as a whole have varying sexual beliefs. Scholarship regarding sexual beliefs and attitudes, such as Laumann's book, *The Social Organization of Sexuality* (1994), have found that even those within the same religious affiliation hold differing opinions and practices of sex. For example, Christians reported various levels of

experience in specific forms of intercourse such as oral or anal sex, and religiously affiliated respondents held varying beliefs on teenage sex, pornography, and sex outside of marriage (p. 106 & 515). These discrepancies in religious communities could cause individuals to feel greater confusion about their sexual morals. Furthermore, this confusion could hinder one's sexual esteem by complicating the congruence between one's standards and sexual behaviors.

Responsibility of the Church

Religious women are vastly more susceptible to negative sexual self-esteem, and the Church has a great opportunity to address this area of injustice. In 2014, Pew Research found that 70.6% of those living in America identify as Christian ("Religious Landscape Study," 2015). No other institution besides the Christian Church has the ability to touch so many people (Haffner & Ott, 2005). More than 60% of young Americans spend one or more hours at church every week (Haffner & Ott, 2005), and religious participation can positively impact people through increasing moral directives, providing healthy role models, and teaching coping skills (Smith, 2003). Church continues to be a formative environment in which people shape their identity, and one's sexual self-perception and value is an essential aspect of this identity.

The Church has the capability to largely influence the sexual self-esteem of women, and they also have a duty to do so. In the Christian scripture known as the Great Commission, Jesus is resurrected from the grave and immediately tells his followers:

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...
(Matthew 28:19-20, New International Version)

The Church body is called to make disciples, which entails establishing relationship with others, showing them the way of full and abundant life in God, and equipping them with His truth and agency to obey His commands. The unjustified shame surrounding women's sexual self-esteem is

a falsehood that must be addressed in the Church. Negative sexual self-esteem is not a part of God's life of abundance for his people, and the Church is called to teach truth about sexual moral standards and sexual identity.

The Church is called to help untangle falsehood within women's negative sexual self-perceptions. Sex is a gift from God, and the Church has a responsibility to shed light on this truth. Temper Longman (2001) supported this point well when he wrote:

The Church has a tendency to make the topic of sexuality a taboo; it is rarely spoken about or discussed in the context of Christian fellowship. The Song [of Songs], however, affirms the importance of love and sex and provides encouragement and a platform for frank talk about sex among God's people. (p. 59)

As Longman noted, the Church has been silent about the issue of sex—and by extension sexual self-esteem—yet scripture clearly demonstrates sex is a part of God's amazing creation that should be discussed. Longman's commentary on the Song of Songs reveals the scripture as a depiction of a couple's desire for "complete union" (p. 91), a desire which is natural and was intentionally invented by God. As Longman described, the first chapter of the Songs even begins with a woman (who represents all women) and the beauty of her sexual desire as well as sexual quality. This entire book of scripture seems to advocate for celebrating sex and promoting positive sexual esteem. While sex is ultimately a beautiful gift from God, other parts of Bible show that not all uses of sex—both in and outside of marriage—glorify God. Humans can pervert the gift of sex into sexual immorality. Therefore in order to improve women's moral judgement and sexual self-esteem, the Church should both teach about the healthy and beautiful gift of sex as well as clarify the definition of sexual immorality.

Intervention

Sexual self-esteem is crucial to everyone's well being, but the specific focus of this intervention is addressing the justice issue of

women in the church and their lack of positive sexual self-esteem. Altering and developing sexual self-esteem takes time (Powell & Jorgensen, 1985), and therefore interventions across all age-groups of women are important. Due to the concerning findings of Abbot et al.'s study regarding younger religious women and their lack of esteem, this paper proposes an intervention targeted at high school and college-age women.

The intervention should take place in the form of a church-based program with the goals of helping women 1) understand what scripture says about sex and sexual identity 2) bring clarity about sexual values and moral judgements and 3) increase feelings of agency in adhering to moral judgement. The program should be rooted in scripture such as the Song of Songs and passages regarding sexual immorality and should adopt a small group structure to encourage authentic questions and discussion. The program should promote conversation about all forms of sexual behavior (e.g. non penile-vaginal intercourse, social media use, pornography, etc.) and include value-based information as well as scientific material. Ideally this interventional program would take place over multiple weeks (i.e., a 4 week program with sessions once or twice a week), but due to time constraints it may be more realistic to have a conference-like program over a single weekend.

This proposed church-based program would help improve women's sexual self-esteem through several means. Firstly, studying scripture about sex will enable women to understand that sex is a gift from God. This new understanding will allow women to have a more positive view of their sexual selves. Additionally, by openly and proactively discussing sexual morality, women can gain clarity and confidence about their sexual moral standards, thus increasing their sexual self-esteem. Through scriptural study and discussion, women can overcome the taboo surrounding the topic of sex. In turn, this will reveal the truth about who women are as sexual beings and how they can enjoy the gift of sex in ways that honor God.

Success of Past Interventions

Powell and Jorgensen (1985) conducted a study on a church-based program similar to the one described above and found that the weekend-long program was highly successful with high school students. Their evaluations proved the program increased participant's sexual knowledge and information as well as increased clarity on participants' sexual values. This improvement in understanding one's sexual values could lead to further confidence in one's moral judgement and thus improve sexual self-esteem over time. Powell and Jorgensen (1985) concluded from their two week post-test period that improving sexual esteem takes time, and therefore these programs should not be the only opportunity to discuss the topic of sex with others in the Church. Therefore in addition to the specific program intervention proposed above, churches and other religiously affiliated organizations ought to incorporate communication about sex in their normal small group studies, sermons, and other applicable communication events.

Another important source for communication regarding sex exists in parent-child relationships. Discussing sex with parents can be pivotal for forming and clarifying one's sexual identity as well as curbing negative sexual health outcomes (Pariera, 2016). Pariera's (2016) study found several communication barriers for parents in initiating conversation about sex with their children, such as believing their child did not want to hear them talk about sex. In addition to identifying these barriers, Pariera also found that when sex is discussed, children often act as the initiators of the conversation. Green and Sollie (1989) analyzed another church-based, sexual education program and found that it increased the communication about sex between children and their parents. While one-time interventions may not immediately increase one's positive sexual self-esteem, interventions have proven to increase communication about sex within preexisting relationships, which may act as a positive influence on esteem over time.

Gap in Research

While a number of churches have addressed the topic of sex and sexual morality,

there has been little to no research about those programs' effectiveness. For example, the Our Whole Lives church-based, sexual education program developed on the East Coast has received moderate scholarship and appraisal (Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Alliance, 2011), but no tests have been conducted to prove the effectiveness of the program. The gap in internal church-based evaluations and external scholarly research has existed for decades. As Scales and Kirby (1981) found in their examination of "exemplary" sexual education programs, only 3 of the 27 programs actually included evaluations of how the program affected its participants. Furthermore, Scales and Kirby (1981) found the few evaluations that were conducted were insufficient, as they only determined program success through audience enthusiasm, lack of community conflict, and support from staff members. In regard to external scholarship, the author of this paper can attest to the lack of research; she only found two scholarly studies pertaining to the effectiveness of church-based programs, both of which were from the 1980's (Green & Sollie, 1989; Powell & Jorgensen, 1985).

Future Research

Future research should investigate the effectiveness of church-based programs on improving participants' sexual self-esteem. In health communication interventions, measurable evaluations are key to help clarify overall goals, identify effective methods, and adjust future programs to produce greater success (Schiavo, 2014, p. 410). Therefore it is crucial for churches as well as scholars to conduct evaluations of church-based, sexual education interventions. Forming these evaluations before creating and executing the program will foster more intentional planning. The evaluation process should contain both quantitative and qualitative elements so participants are able to reflect on their experiences and conceptualize their key takeaways from the program. Both church leaders as well as scholars will benefit from further evaluation of these

programs because it will indicate what interventions practices are truly effective in improving sexual self-esteem. Christian churches have a large reach and influence over the American population, and therefore it is crucial that religious leaders and academic researchers alike ensure these sexual education interventions are as successful as possible.

Conclusion

Sexual self-esteem is an important aspect of one's identity, and religious women in particular have been burdened with negative sexual esteem. While the causation of this poor self-perception could be hypothesized as a result of social, cultural, or religious constructs, the Christian church has a great opportunity to expose falsehoods regarding sex, shame, and identity. As Longman (2001) indicated, sex has been a taboo topic that many churches have neglected to address in depth. However, the Church is called to disciple people in truth and therefore bring clarity about both sexual immorality as well as the beautiful gift of sex. Methods of this discipleship are actualized within the proposed church-based, sexual education program. The few studies conducted on the success of these interventions have shown the programs aid one's sexual self-esteem development through increasing clarity and communication about sexual values.

In this age of hypersexualization, sexual messages saturate daily life. Unhealthy ideas about sex are communicated through advertisements, music, movies, and more. These external messages may influence people's understanding about sex and their value as a sexual beings. Faith helps develop individuals' internal worth and moral compass, both of which are crucial to navigate these negative external messages about sex. The Church may not be able to stop the negative messages influencing the world, but they can help combat these unhealthy narratives and allow people to understand their true identities. The Church has both the capability and responsibility to intervene in this issue of women's negative sexual self-esteem.

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And now the telling of...

Eleonas

Elizabeth Lowe, Sabrina Ballard, Zachary Edwards,
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Assigned in COM 512: Intercultural Media Literacy (Dr. Roslyn Satchel)

Overview

Our six-part mini-series explores the lives of six different individuals from Iran and Afghanistan. Their stories intertwine in a Greek refugee camp where they are all currently living. As they form relationships and settle into their new reality, they start to share their lives prior to fleeing their war-torn countries. Each character's story is told through flashbacks and highlights their lives in their home countries.

Summary²

In the pilot episode, all of the historical background and character introductions are showcased to give context to what this six-part miniseries will contain. It brings to light the terror of living in Afghanistan and Iran, as well as the poverty and hardship of living in the refugee camps. However, it also shows that life goes on and that communities and friendships are being formed.

The first character introduced is *Atisheh Dariush*. Throughout her episode, the audience is able to see that she is 30 year old lesbian who has had to hide her homosexuality from her family and friends. After being outed, the controversy and violence surrounding the situation leads her to flee her home in search of a new life. This episode will focus on the intersectionality of her identity and the LGBTQ rights she is fighting for. The second character introduced is *Farhad Naseri*. He is a 24-year old

medical student who is unable, due to his Kurdish ethnicity, to pursue higher education in Iran. This episode really focuses on his intellect, his drive to succeed, and how that influences his decision to find that in Europe. The third character is *Nafisa Kabir*, a ten year old girl who has fled with her family to Greece. In her episode, her parent's marital tensions are highlighted due to differing faiths, yet the audience sees how she wants to have a normal and innocent childhood in the refugee camp. The fourth character is *Chamran Raouf*. He is a 37 year old Iranian man who used to have a successful career as a professional basketball player. The audience sees his life with his wife, and the hardships of losing success and what it means to pursue a career he never imagined. The final character is Pastor Muhammed Koushani. He is the one who unites all of the characters together through his ministry at Agape Church. In his episode, the journey he makes from Afghanistan to Greece is told in great detail, showing the struggles his families had to endure. It also shows the sacrifices he has made to stay in Greece, despite being able to leave for a Northern European country, so that he can serve other refugees.

Throughout the entire miniseries, each character is complex and defined, carefully developed in their specific episodes. Their stories are intertwined and allow for growth and the breakdown of false stereotypes and generalizations. Overall, this miniseries tells the stories of Afghan and Iranian refugees who are not only trying to survive, but thrive in a new world.

² This is the summary to a proposed miniseries.

Episode One: Pilot

First opens up with boat scenes from media, some people don't make it, voice-overs of newscasters, Obama commenting, scenes of Taliban, Iran hostage crisis, etc. Juxtapose that with showing the environment of Greece, the refugee camps, their personal trailers, etc, normal looking people playing soccer. Afterwards, they gather to eat and talk with Pastor Mohammed and other main characters.

Episode Two: Atisheh Dariush

Episode two follows a young Iranian woman at the age of 30 who came to Eleonas on her birthday. Her name is Atisheh Dariush. At the time of her arrival, she is frightened, scared, and silent. Many of her flashbacks of her episode pertain to her birthday the previous year in Iran, where birthdays are celebrated in the home with spicy traditional food, a cake, and candles. When the guests arrive, they greet Atisheh by saying "tavalodat mobarak" which means "happy birthday" in Farsi. Men and women customarily celebrate in different rooms. This day is special to Atisheh, as she is able to see her lover Fatima. The two have been enacting in a forbidden homosexual affair, which is prohibited in Shiite nations. The party is going well, until one of the women decides to out the couple. This leads to the great distress of Atisheh, violence ensues, and the night ends in a fury. Atisheh's escapes with her older brother in the middle of the night, and the rest of the story is history. Atisheh is seen without her Burka on when she gets off the boat. She is smart, articulate, and an accomplished women's divorce lawyer. Her new life mission is striving for the opportunity to share her experience with the world, and in her episode, she is starting to write a book that will become a *New York Times* best seller someday. For now, though, she is labeled as a displaced refugee.

Episode Three: Farhad Naseri

The third episode will be focusing on a 24-year-old male medical student named Farhad Naseri (see casting for character background). As this episode focuses on flashbacks of his life back in Iran and his journey to his present-day situation, many of his childhood activities, education, family experiences, and friendships and rivalries are highlighted.

Farhad's childhood flashbacks will consist of looking deeper into what it was like being a Kurd in Iran, and how his large family interacted. It will showcase what it looks like to be a normal child in this country while juxtaposing the hard life of a non-dominant group member. This section will also highlight Islam and the role it plays in the culture of his family.

In the education flashbacks, they will focus on Farhad's intelligence, his drive to become a successful doctor, as well as his rivalry with Sabrina's character all throughout school. It will highlight the trials and hardships he has had to overcome because of he of his Kurdish descent. The flashbacks will do this by highlighting the story of Farhad and Sabrina's character competing for the best grades. And while they both score high marks, Farhad is not given the same opportunities because of his ethnicity. And due to this inequality, his family decides to send him to Northern Europe in hopes of a better future.

The journey flashbacks will show the arduous tests and trials of a "boat person" and what it was like to travel alone. It will highlight the pressures of a young man who has been "invested in" by his family to get a job, make money, and send it back. This part will show the very human parts of Farhad as he struggles with loneliness, coming to faith, the controversy of telling his parents, and his path towards regaining respect and dignity in the eyes of the world.

Episode Four: Nafisa Kabir

The fourth episode focuses on a 10 year old girl named Nafisa. Her story is told through telling her story to an adult in Eleonas. Her father is Christian, while her mother is Muslim. Through flashbacks we see the marital tension between her parents, the political oppression of Christians in Afghanistan, and her family fleeing their home in Afghanistan.

After Nafisa leaves the adults she told her story to, she wanders around Eleonas and flashbacks to the boat they took to get to Greece. After arriving in Greece, Nafisa and her brother claimed Christianity as their religion, and their mother told them that she didn't love them anymore. After this, they went to Eleonas to live with their father. In the camp, their father struggles to find a way to move them to Austria. He's running out of money, and legally he can't work to make anymore. Nafisa and her brother, despite the financial struggle, try to make home within the Eleonas camp. They play sports with the other children in the day time, and a game of cards at night with their father.

Episode Five: Chamran Raouf

The fifth episode focuses on Chamram Raouf, a 37-year-old Iranian man born in Tehran who traveled to the refugee camp with his wife, Zenab. The episode uses flashbacks to develop Chamran's background but he has never really faced any struggle until having to leave Iran. His background includes his career as a basketball player with Iran's national team as well as his studies in economics at the University of Tehran.

We learn that he and his wife hope to reach London to work in economics and the embassy, respectively. Zenab teaches Chamran English to give him a chance at finding work once they arrive in London. Chamran is a stoic person so he acts as if he has everything together but his reality is that he is crumbling under the immense pressure to learn as doubts they will ever

leave. Chamran meets Farhad Naseri, who has doubts of his own; Chamran offers as much wisdom as he can, still acting like he has it together. The episode ends with him breaking down privately to his wife, she reminds him that they will eventually get through this time.

Episode Six: Pastor Muhammad Koushani

The episode begins with Muhammad reflecting on his life prior to arriving in the refugee camp. Muhammad was a businessman and a devout Muslim who loved his family and his. When the war struck his town, he tried to wait it out, hoping that the circumstances would change. However as the war progressed and the severity of violence increased, he had no choice but to flee with his family. He and his family walked for miles from Afghanistan to Iran, and from Iran to Turkey until he finally reached the coast. After hard negotiations, he found someone to agree to take him and his family to Greece.

The boat ride for Muhammad and his family was a traumatic and life-threatening experience. On the six-hour passage, there was a storm that flipped over the boat; separating him and his entire family. He was stuck in a situation in where he had to save his wife and his two children. Luckily, his daughter knew how to swim. So, he told his daughter to hold onto her baby brother while he attempted to save his wife. By the time he came back to his daughter she had lost her brother. Fortunately, they were close to land when they found him washed up on the shore. Muhammad performed CPR for hours until his son came back alive. In that time he prayed to Allah to save his son. His son was then resuscitated. The Flashbacks end and he is in the camp a week after the tragic event.

The following day he hears his wife scream and he runs into the tent. He sees his wife having a miscarriage. In his sorrow, he prays fervently to Allah, in where he has his first encounter with Christ. He hears his voice and Jesus tells him to

follow him. He listens and it jumpstarts his ministry. He struggled with what it means to be a follower of Christ without really trying to know him or his word. Soon Agape Church comes in to aid the refugees. He encounters the leader and becomes his mentee. He learns from him and then develops his ministry; uniting the characters in the other episodes together. The camera showcases all of the characters sharing their stories. Eventually, he and his family are granted asylum. They accept, but he decides to go back after some years to continue to work in his ministry.

Context for Series

A refugee camp in Greece named Eleonas: 5 people from different careers, socioeconomic statuses, etc. and the narration of their lives and experiences through present day and flashbacks. Each episode focuses on an individual character's story, encompassing their character now and in flashbacks creating a fully understanding of their personal stories. These episodes will discover the characters each individual dynamic nature, their culture they are from. This will be shown in a modern frame showing technology in Iran/Afghanistan and the capability and sufficiency of a nation without westernization. These characters break stereotypes by showing their home countries, socioeconomic statuses, level of education, religion, romantic, familial relationships and most importantly, their individual intersectional identities.

Programming

Netflix, Inc. serves as a streaming internet subscription service company that distributes films and television on the internet. Netflix is very diverse operation in that it provides domestic and international streaming services and domestic rental DVDs. Netflix accesses its films and television shows from various networks and content providers "through fixed-fee licenses, revenue sharing agreements and direct purchases"

(Netflix, 2017). By having the ability to market and advertise its services in the global market, through various media, Netflix has ultimately become the new "cable" in our modern society. As result of its success in pioneering streaming services, its success has allowed them to have the capability and freedom.

Netflix has been a platform for shows that change culture, break boundaries, and create social change. It has presented documentaries, films, and TV shows with unconventional story lines and dynamic characters. Because it is an independent entertainment company, their revenue does not rely on solely on viewership, but rather it focuses on the number of subscriptions every month. Television broadcasting is a sponsored, corporate medium. Because of this, society may progress at a faster rate than TV shows in regard to race. Netflix does not rely on advertising, and they therefore have the freedom to be as progressive as they want in terms of content. Success of their shows relies mostly on this content rather than the sponsors of the show (Shanahan, 2015). They therefore have freedom to show diverse and progressive content that appeals to an extremely wide and diverse audience.

This platform is best suited for our mini series, Eleonas, because of our thought-provoking and unprecedented plot lines and characters. We believe that Netflix allows for creative and diverse shows that do not depend on high ratings or viewership, allowing us to tell the real and vulnerable stories of Afghan and Iranian refugees. By not perpetuating stereotypes, we hope to reframe the narrative surrounding these marginalized groups and the refugee crisis.

Primary Audience

We are targeting all Netflix subscribers, ranging from 18-35 years old. A large portion of this demographic have access to a Netflix subscription and are willing to consume more progressive content than would be shown on

network television. In our experience, people in this demographic tend to prefer thoughtful and innovative programming. Netflix has proven to make diversity within its programming a top priority with shows such as *Master of None*, *Dear White People*, and *Orange is the New Black*.

Competition

Due to the fact that we will use Netflix as our platform, our show will not need to compete for a particular time slot. As a result of the fact that as of today there are no shows out in the market producing similar content to ours, we do not foresee our show competing with any other program.

Literature Review

Afghan and Iranian Refugees in American Media

The media's visual images and events deeply influence the public opinion of Afghan and Iranian refugees in the United States (Husselbee & Elliott, 2002). The evolution of Afghan and Iranian refugee media coverage finds its basis in history and evolves with the current events. The limited amount of literature highlights how photographs, visual images, and the general media have skewed the way Americans perceive Afghan and Iranian refugee experiences. Negative stigmas have emerged through the generalization and simplicity of certain images. This problem is immense and pervasive, causing one to think of how to make the shift from generalization to specificity and care. The media construction project aims to make this shift happen through emphasizing the complex and rich lives of Afghan and Iranian refugees. This will not only fill the gap in the literature, but also bring awareness and education to the American public on the experiences of these people.

"The way issues are presented in the mass media has a significant impact on audience awareness and understanding of public problems and concerns" (Husselbee & Elliott, 2002, p.

835). The media create frames that help individuals form their own personal frames by providing pieces of news or information. They assign specific meaning to different events, allowing the media to choose which issues are most important (Ryan, 2004). The events that are not as emphasized may be just as salient, but are not interesting enough to air, meaning the media holds a great amount of power on what to include and what to exclude (Ryan, 2004). "The images we see on our television screen play a crucial role in determining how we construct our reality" (Wright, 2002). However, there is not much general knowledge on how information is communicated through these images, which is the problem (Wright, 2002).

Media Representation of Afghan Refugees

This can be seen in the United States with the concept of "clash of civilizations" (Cloud, 2004, p. 286). This refers to how the U.S. always faces problems and conflicts with Others—usually being the Islamic Other, which is a threat to Western capitalism (Cloud, 2004, p. 286). The Islamic Other is seen as a threat to capitalism because of the binary stereotypes that are highlighted in media. The image of the white man stands for nation, economic system, and capitalism. The inverse is anti-American and pre-capitalism which is the same as barbarity (Cloud, 2004). Due to this image sequence, the American public is primed to feel antagonism against the Afghan man (Cloud, 2004). On the other hand, there is the concept of the white man's burden. With images showing Others as being savages and inferior, many people feel like they have the right, responsibility, and privilege to go and save those people from themselves (Cloud, 2004). By choosing to highlight the threat of Islam to Western capitalism, audiences construct their own reality of seeing this Other as inferior, thus influencing their personal biases and generalizations (Cloud, 2004; Wright, 2002). These "images of Afghan women and men

establish a binary opposition between a white, Western, modern subject” adding to the “white man’s burden” (Cloud, 2004, p. 286). By identifying Afghan people as savage and helpless, the media create an opposite for national identification, thereby strengthening it in the process (Cloud, 2004). The strategy of composing these images creates this binary opposition between the American self and the Afghan Other as enemy (Cloud, 2004).

Even before the September 11th attacks, there was a huge humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, however, many superpowers decided to ignore it (Wright, 2004). Ever since 1978, when the communist regime took power in Afghanistan, refugees have continued to increase in numbers. Shortly thereafter, Russia invaded, trying to uphold the communist government, and by 1986, there were 5 million refugees. However, there were not only political problems, but natural disasters as well. Large earthquakes left more Afghans homeless, and many fleeing for their lives (Wright, 2004). When refugees flee from oppression, destruction, and persecution, they are stripped of their humanity, along with their voice, presence, and agency (Nyers, 2013). No longer having a homeland or a sense of self-worth or self-identity causes this loss of humanity (O’Neill & Spybey, 2003). In response to all of this, Americans soon began to lose interest; calling Afghanistan a “basket case” that no one wanted to spend the time or resources in helping (Wright, 2004, p. 100). However, after the September 11th attacks, that was no longer an option, and with the ensuing media coverage, it made Afghan refugees an important influence on the United States’ reaction to this terrorist attack (Wright, 2004). At that time, Afghans were largely portrayed as terrorists or victims when highlighted in the media.

Presently, Afghan refugees are fleeing war and violence, which has resulted in the highest number of women and children casualties in 2015 (Gossman, 2015). According to the United

Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, in 2015, the Taliban and other anti-government forces were responsible for over 70% of civilian casualties (Gossman, 2015). Many Afghan refugees are fleeing generalized conflict and will continue to escape to Europe as long as violence, persecution, and insecurity ensues (Gossman, 2015).

Media Representation of Iranian Refugees

Iran has had similar circumstances as well. Before the Iran Hostage Crisis in 1979, aware and educated Americans saw Iran as a country with rich heritage, culture, and viewed the people as intelligent and professional (Mohsen, 2006). However, after this event occurred, it created xenophobic views against Iranians and Islam (Mohsen, 2006). The media construed these people as uncivilized and violent terrorists (Mohsen, 2006). Headlines on several news outlets, such as the Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph, denoted negativity and anger due to the use of loaded terms like ‘furious,’ ‘revenge,’ and ‘mob’ (New, 2001). There was also intense detail on the religion of the hostage takers, which in effect, used islamophobia and created a binary opposition between the Christian West and Muslim Middle East (New, 2001; Cloud, 2004). Ironically, faith was not the motive of the hostage takers (New, 2001).

While Persia was seen as a great and exotic nation, Iran is juxtaposed as a demonized threat to the United States (Zand, 2010). This country is seen as an irrational other compared to the civilized West (New, 2001). Because the West associates any Muslim with Bin Laden, the West turns the Muslim into an enemy. Since Iran is a Muslim country, it is then considered an enemy of the United States (Zand, 2010). Rather than focus on the ordinary lives of regular Iranian Muslims who spend time with friends, play sports, and celebrate holidays like any

American, the Western media highlights only radical stories and extremist situations (Zand, 2010). This reduces the images of Iran and its people and makes them evil symbols to the United States and Europe (Zand, 2010). By using techniques such as hyperbole, distortion, selective reporting and factual omission, the media creates Iran into a threat against Western cultures (New, 2001). Instead Western media should understand “that the reality is much richer and more complex than such crude constructs, and [that] the Iranian is not a projection of Western interests and ideas, but determined, diverse, independently thinking and compassionate -- in a word, human” (Zand, 2010).

Presently, many Iranian refugees flee their country because of political persecution, human right abuses, the worsening economic situation, and the international sanctions regarding the nuclear program (Agius, 2013). The freedom of expression has been limited due to the presidential election in 2009. Because of this, many Iranians have left the country (Agius, 2013). Along with this, Kurds and other ethnic minorities in Iran are harshly discriminated against and are not given the same legal rights as the rest of the population (Agius, 2013). Coupled with the rising inflation and unemployment rate, many people continue to leave. The international sanctions also add an element to the people fleeing Iran. It is making life harder inside the country because of the numerous consequences of the sanctions that are put in place (Agius, 2013).

Reduced Stories

The literature shows that the refugees’ complex stories and experiences have been reduced to simplistic ideas through the media shown. This was seen in the Afghan crisis. During live interviews, videos of nonspecific refugees were interspersed, showing dramatic scenes of

women in burkas and children walking through the desert. It may have hooked the audience and appeared illustrative, but the images were arbitrary in relation to the commentary (Wright, 2004). This reduces horrific and extraordinary events into “visual wallpaper” (Wright, 2004, p. 101). There is no reason for the images to be there other than to provide some relief or evoke an emotional response from the audience (Wright, 2004). “The refugee crisis is framed within Western concerns; the connections made to the United States and Britain through the general narrative act almost as justifications for the refugee story” (Wright, 2004, p. 105). This style of reporting serves refugees poorly. While they are interviewed, shown in images, and invited to speak about their personal experience, they are unable to provide a commanding voice that gives a broader picture of the political situation (Wright, 2004). They have to rely on other people and organizations to get their messages across. Thus, the voices of the refugees remain in the framing that a reporter, NGO, or translator decide (Wright, 2004).

The literature also shows how Iranians have been reduced to demonized stereotypes, binary opposites, and incorrect ideology (New, 2001). Through different events like the Iranian Hostage Crisis and the student protests in Tehran, media headlines and content have made it easy for Americans to base their understanding of Iranians on stereotypes and binary representation (New, 2001). Iran’s unique and historical experiences of experimentation with democracy and diverse religious practices are disregarded (Fayyaz & Shirazi, 2013; New, 2001). This is due to the photographs of groups of women wearing black chadors that “confirmed representations of Islam’s anti-liberal nature in the popular imagination” (Fayyaz & Shirazi, 2013, p. 56-57). Media have represented the Iranian community in complete opposition between the West and their values of freedom and liberty and radical Muslim beliefs of intolerance and violence (New, 2001).

Victims, Terrorists, and Boat People

Several articles and researchers state that refugees are stuffed into constraining boxes because of the events that the media highlights. The visuals that have been shown on Sky News feature stereotypical refugee images-- a man with a bundle on his back walking past crumbling buildings into an unknown future (Wright, 2004). Women and children are made to look like victims in the media, disempowering them and perpetuating a cycle of helplessness (Guerrero & Tinkler, 2010). For example, a photograph of an Afghan man with a gun is portrayed as a terrorist or violent jihadist, or a veiled woman is seen as oppressed, when in reality there are much more complicated stories behind these images (Wright, 2004; Cloud, 2004; Rane, Ewart, & Martinkus, 2014). Because extremists and the actions they commit are deemed as newsworthy, that is what the public sees as representing Islam (Rane, Ewart, & Martinkus, 2014). Another stereotype that is perpetuated by the media are "boat people" (Mannik, 2012, p. 264). These are the refugees seen coming from Turkey to Greece in rubber rafts and boats. They were negatively perceived by the public because they are seen as violating the norms of entry and therefore are illegally entering the country. Because of this violation, they are seen less as victims and more as threats to national security (Mannik, 2012).

Effects of Media Representation

People that rely only on mainstream media for their education on Muslims will not gain a full picture (Rane, Ewart, & Martinkus, 2014). "Regardless of whether refugees, [or boat people], are depicted as victims or as a threat to national security, photography and other visual imagery are used to distance, sensationalize and discriminate" (Mannik, 2012, p. 265). These images try to give a generalized representation of who refugees are, without letting audiences get

close to who the actual individual is (Wright, 2004). While in reality, refugees are just ordinary people with incredible experiences (O'Neill & Spybey, 2003). Visual media has allowed audiences to objectify refugees and ignore their historical, cultural, and political circumstances (Wright, 2002).

After synthesizing the literature, one can see that many researchers have found a prevalent problem when the media covers stories and events surrounding refugees. With little regard to their cultural and historical backgrounds, the media simplify the refugees into several generalizations and categories. This, in turn, causes American viewers to acquire a very limited perspective on the actual lives of these people. With this in mind, the media construction project will serve to provide a new lens through which to look at Afghan and Iranian refugees. There will be a focus on developing each individual's unique journey throughout a specific episode within the six-part miniseries. The literature helped to create a bigger picture of what needs to be done to shift the stigma surrounding these marginalized groups of Afghans and Iranians. This project intends to do just that and raise awareness of the intricate and inspiring stories of the Afghan and Iranian people.

Functions, Experiences, and Successes of Afghan and Iranian Refugees

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recognizes that our world is facing the highest levels of displacement on record. They claim that "an unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from their home. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18" (UNHCR, 2017). To adequately tackle the stereotypical portrayal of --primarily Afghan and Iranian refugees-- 12 peer-reviewed sources from EBSCOhost have been selected based on the effects of 9/11, immigration policy, experience, and success.

9/11 Media Coverage

In *Collateral Coverage: Media Images of Afghan Refugees*, Wright (2001) addresses the post 9/11 media coverage and the role that visual images played in portraying refugee stereotypes. In the article, Wright examines the role of visual images—focusing primarily on three BBC Television News Special Reports. Wright proposes three factors that result in the likelihood of global media coverage: 1) in order to attract the attention of the West, the crisis must be so extreme that it is hard to ignore 2) in order to gain airtime, the crisis must produce dramatic imagery 3) the style of the media coverage needs to stimulate the interest of viewers (Wright, 2004).

With the destruction of the World Trade Center, in a matter of hours, not only was terrorism the center stage for the news, but also Afghanistan was placed at the center stage during the crisis. Looking back at the historical events that occurred during 9/11, it reveals that Afghanistan was not directly involved in the terrorist attacks. In fact, the 19 men that were charged were actually Muslim Al Qaeda—an international extremist Islamic group led by Osama Bin Laden. Significantly, at the time 9/11 occurred, Osama Bin Laden relocated his headquarters from Sudan to Afghanistan. According to *The Invasion of Afghanistan, October 7, 2001: Did 9/11 Justify the War in Afghanistan?*, Griffin (2010) claims that out of fear of a second attack, the United States justified its military operations in Afghanistan post 9/11 for three reasons: 1. because 19 Al Qaeda members led the first attack 2. because the offense was authorized by Al Qaeda leader, Osama Bin Laden, while stationed in Afghanistan. 3. because Afghanistan refused to hand over Osama Bin Laden. However, when looking closely at the conflict between both nations, the United States insensitive communication styles accused Afghanistan of working alongside terrorists; threatening their face in the international arena. In

an attempt to save face and protect their global image, Afghanistan wanted to come to a formal agreement in that it would deliver Bin Laden to a third party rather than to the United States directly. However, the United States refused to negotiate and instead primed Afghanistan as a guilty conspirator with Al Qaeda. Embarking on an illegal war, unauthorized by the UN Security Council, the United States media began to frame Afghanistan and its citizens as terrorists. So, as a result of this framing and the inability to distinguish what ethnic group was apart from the conflict, Afghanistan, and other Middle Eastern nations were primed as terrorists; igniting the portrayal of refugees and immigrants in the media as undercover terrorists.

Through his research, Wright uncovers that the media consistently displays disasters and conflicts using Matt Frei's five-act structure: exposition, development, climax, resolution, and denouement (Wright, 2004). However, with regards to the refugee crisis, the media deviated from the formula and instead perpetually exemplified the plight and dehumanization those it affected primarily, the refugees.

Emergence of Xenophobia

Xenophobia that emerged after the attack on September 11, 2001, created extreme sentiments of hate and racism towards Muslims and Arab refugees. Just nine months after 9/11, the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee found over 700 violent attacks toward Muslims and found that 56% of Muslims in Canada experienced some form of discrimination (Rousseau & Jamil, 2007). Though the literature of Rousseau & Jamil deviates from the Afghan and Iranian focus, there is a direct relationship with 9/11 based on Pakistan's historical ties with Afghanistan. Because Al Qaeda's rule was recognized in Pakistan, the CIA and the international community—including Canada—came to the conclusion that due the Taliban's close

relations with Pakistan, it would not only view Afghanistan and Iran as suspected threats to the United States' and Canada's National Security, but also Pakistan would be considered a threat too. Although the article does not showcase racism and xenophobia in the United States, it does show how a bordering nation can be affected by the influence of media portrayals.

Rousseau and Jamil (2007) studied two Pakistani groups that received the most backlash and discrimination post 9/11— an immigrant community in Montreal and Karachi— with the hopes of discovering what the different meanings created by 9/11 by individuals and the affected perceptions of the self and others due to 9/11 were. In Montreal, they interviewed those who came from a community centered society that lacked proper education and had low income. In Karachi, they interviewed a group that were highly educated and fell between the middle and upper-income class. The results of the study showed that although both ethnic groups shared somewhat similar socio demographics, their sentiments post 9/11 were significantly different (Rousseau & Jamil, 2007). The effects of xenophobia and racism in Canada sparked a sense of anger and resentment in the Karachi group (Rousseau & Jamil, 2007). While sentiments of fear and subdued anger were more reserved by the Montreal group. Although both groups come from opposite socioeconomic groups, both have a concern of their image and how they are perceived in society. Unfortunately, this negative perception for a long time affected their mobility and capability to live normal lives.

Immigration Climate Before Trump

Before examining the present-day political activity surrounding the Iranian and Afghani refugee crisis, it is pertinent to analyze the immigration climate before President Trump's inauguration. Before his commencement, there was an already heightened sentiment of racism of

xenophobia towards foreigners. On Sept. 20, 2001, Bush declared war on terror. His sentiments addressed to the Congress and American people are still deeply embedded in society today. As found on The Guardian President Bush stated,

Tonight, we are a country awakened to danger and called to defend freedom. Our grief has turned to anger, and anger to resolution. Whether we bring our enemies to justice, or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done...On September the 11th, enemies of freedom committed an act of war against our country...The evidence we have gathered all points to a collection of loosely affiliated...Al Qaeda is to terror what the mafia is to crime. But its goal is not making money; its goal is remaking the world - and imposing its radical beliefs on people everywhere (The Guardian, 2001).

At the end of his presidency, the war on terror was far from over. As President Obama came into office in 2009, he too was determined to end the war on terrorism. In Obama and Terrorism, Stern (2015) reveals that Obama's take on counter terrorism would be more transparent and ethical than President Bush. However, the political and social climate of foreigners traveling into the United States primarily from the Middle East and Southeast Asia— where the majority of Muslims reside— would be very strict.

In Bhattacharjee's (2010) article, *Prominent Iranian Scientist Blocked From Attending Physics Meeting*, he reveals that Iranian physicist Farhad Ardalan, a fellow of the American Physical Society, was not able to enter the United States due to the fact that his name appeared in the U.S. government records as a criminal (Bhattacharjee, 2010). Wrongly accused, Bhattacharjee was denied access into the United States because of having an ethnic connotation to terrorists. This is not the first time the United States government mistook someone's identity in

the visa process as a recorded criminal due to the similarity of extremist's names. Similarly, in 2006 Goverdhan Mehta, an Indian chemist, ran into the same problem when the U.S. embassy denied his visa application (Bhattacharjee, 2010). These unfortunate mistakes keep highly valued academics from continuing their research in the United States and improving our overall world. Further, this article provides insight into America's strict relationship with foreign immigration before Trump's presidency.

Trump's Immigration Policy

Next, it is crucial to look at U.S. immigration policy in light of the more recent refugee crisis. In David Grunblatt article, President-Elect Trump and Immigration Policy: The First Six Months—What Can We Really Expect Grunblatt (2017) correctly, predicted the possible actions that President Trump could take in the first six months of his presidency regarding immigration policy, rescinding President Obama's Executive Orders-- most significantly DACA and DAPA--and focus the National Budget removing and deporting undocumented people (Grunblatt, 2017). Most significantly, buckling down in immigration policy limited the number of refugees allowed to gain asylum in the United States. On September 5, his administration did precisely that. What he failed to predict was Trump's targeted crackdown on immigrants and refugees from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan and Yemen.

In Immigration order threatens overseas talent, Stone (2017) showcases how Trump's 90-day executive order to stop entry from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen would threaten its foreign talent from continuing to work in and improve the economy of the United States. As a result of the 90-day executive order, the United States restricted international academics from entering the United States due to their ethnicity. For the academics who lived in

the United States such as professors and students, it caused fear that they might get kicked out of the nation and lose their jobs. Stone states, "More Iranian academics are likely to be hit by the order than any other nationality. The open letter notes that some 1500 students from Iran have received PhDs from U.S. universities in the past three years" (Stone, 2017). He further interviews Hananeh Esmailbeigi, who is an Iranian-born biomedical engineer at the University of Illinois in Chicago that if Iranian academics were deported, then the majority of the staff and department heads will be deported, as well (Stone, 2017).

Experiences

The next literature pertains to the experiences of Iranian refugees. Although Iran, did not have a direct relation to 9/11 like Afghanistan, it too was considered a threat to national security. Iranian researcher Flora Keshishian discusses how the media's portrayal of Iranians affected her acculturation process in the United States following the Iranian revolution; ensuing 53 Americans who were held hostage in Tehran by the followers of extremist politician Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (Keshishian, 2000). The crisis resulted in Keshishian, as well as many other Iranians, left to defend their character and good standing. There was a sense of fear that Iranians living in the U.S. would meet the same fate as the Japanese, which could potentially lead to their placement in internment camps. Keshishian reflects, "I will never forget that as an Iranian during this period I had to go to the immigration office to prove that I was not involved in any political activities, that I was here legally, and that I could support myself financially... It was isolating, humiliating, and painful to be scrutinized as a suspect" (Keshishian, 2000).

This same fear and trauma is reflected in Mohsen Mobasher's article. After the hostage of the 53 Americans, frustration and anger on America's part led to the United States imposing

economic and political sanctions to Iran. Following the sanctions, Iranian students were forced to “register with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to determine whether they held proper documentation and had maintained their student status” (Mobasher, 2006). Most significantly, Iranian students experienced the worst scrutiny, disrespect, and discrimination in the United States. Part of the Iranian experience involved Americans burning their national flag, Iranian-owned business faced boycotts, anti-Iranian protests, and more. Most significantly, Mobasher found that in almost every major university, there were protests and discrimination of Iranian students. During the crises, Louisiana state and New Mexico State University stopped enrolling Iranian students (Mobasher, 2006). Additionally, the Mississippi legislature approved the doubling of tuition for Iranian students in order to prevent them from accessing higher level education (Mobasher, 2006). In less than a few months after the crisis, Iranian men and women experienced extreme discrimination and hatred from the American people and institutions.

Psychological Effects Today

In *Belongings Beyond Borders: Reflections of Young Refugees on Their Relationships with Location*, Muir and Gannon (2016) study the effects of location on the psychological experiences of young separated refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan. Both Muir and Gannon interview a man named Karim about the process of finding a job in London. He states, “I hate the Home Office and Job Centre... because for example sometimes they can play with your mind, they can make you angry and you can’t do anything with it... Because... they have a power, they can do whatever” (Muir and Gannon, 2016). Overall, all of these cases exemplify that though immigrants and refugees all have different experiences in their host country, they have similarities that at one point

they experienced some form of discrimination, helplessness, and/ or trauma.

Successes

In one study, Bozorgmehr Mehdi and Daniel Douglas look at the socio-economic success of such second-generation Iranians. They found that because second-generation Iranians did not have to face learning a new culture, language, or face settling in foreign countries, they were more successful socially and economically than the first generation. In addition, this study discovered that they faced fewer social problems in comparison to their parents and grandparents, but did face more discrimination than any other non-dominant group in the United States (Mehdi & Douglas, 2011). However, most significantly, as more second-generation Iranians become more educated and gain opportunities that were once impossible to their grandparents and parents, it is estimated that over the next decade we will see a stronger and more mobile second and third-generation Iranian Americans that have more strength and power in the United States (Mehdi & Douglas, 2011).

Based on the literature provided it is made apparent that the media has framed Refugees as terrorists. Rather than presenting the correct historical context of the events of 9/11 in the media, our nation, as well as our allies, have created a sentiment of anti-Muslim and anti-refugee in our society. Though there is a fear that if refugees are integrated into society there will be increased terrorist attacks; based on the information provided it showcases that Afghan and Iranian refugees are normal people who have nothing to do with the conflict. They, endure so much trauma and oppression all for the cost of freedom. Therefore, the perception of Arab refugees must change.

American Perception of Iranian and Afghan Refugees

Post 9/11 era began with deep American distrust of Middle Eastern refugees entering the country due to the fear of more attacks like the ones that happened in New York and Washington in 2001. Discrimination became justified in our societal psyche conditioned a new layer of cultural and political prejudice toward these perceived groups. This “othering” of groups such as Afghans and Iranians come from the disproportionate portrayal in media of Arabs as terrorists. Jaideep Singh (2010) describes the media’s creation of the stereotypical, and in turn, feared conception of a what a terrorist “looks like;” darker complexion, bearded and wearing a turban. These physical attributes tied to the “othering” of Middle Eastern Muslim peoples are targeted (many of which are Sikh attributes not Muslim) to develop the negative framework and perception of “Muslim” or “Arab” people. Muslim and Arab people are not synonymous but mainstream ideology has framed the two in this way (Singh, 2010). More importantly for refugees, the general American public is not empathic about the crises in these countries, and as a society experiences very little exposure to media that portrays these refugees as “people like us.” Any news of Iranian and Afghan refugees is distracted, to an extent, from any focus on the actual people or their humanity (Selm, 2003). While Syrian refugees are often portrayed as victims and a society who we may feel morally obligated to assist, American media rarely consults the similar refugee crisis in Afghanistan in the same manner. There were approximately 2.7 million Afghan refugees in 2015, the second largest group of refugees after Syrians. Afghans were also the second largest group of asylum seekers (Skodo, 2017).

Why then, are the perceptions of urgency and legitimacy of the two refugee crises so discrepant? Perhaps even beyond the lack of images and humanity portrayed in the media, along with American paranoia of the “Arab,” lies a deeper political reason for the neglecting of Afghan

refugees. Robert D. Crews (2016) describes that in Washington, it is common to hear the view of Afghanistan as “a country defined by a never-ending struggle among warlords, tribal chiefs, and religious fanatics” (p. 2). While our history of involvement in Afghanistan is complicated it is highly likely that the perpetuated narrative of these refugees, or lack of attention in the media, is due to our political history. During the height of the Cold War, the United States established its international position against the communist power of the Soviet Union, and chose to exercise this influence in Afghanistan preemptively. The U.S. backed Islamist group of the mujahideen fought in resistance the leftist government and its Soviet backers in the 1980’s. While American policies and interference did not lead to the direct rise of the Taliban, the mujahideen party leaders and their families who received U.S. financial and military aid during the anti-Soviet jihad continue to dominate Afghan politics to this very day (Crews, 2016).

This American perception of the inferior nation of Afghanistan has made it easier to shift blame of the refugee crisis back onto the Afghans themselves. Perceiving them as backward, tribal, or ungrateful for the gift of American intervention contributes to the American obliviousness with regards to its role in the war, and not having to confront the mess we made in our political interference in the 1980’s (Crews, 2016).

This post-Soviet interference led to our political obligations in Afghan refugee interference, as funding for humanitarian assistance for Afghan refugees was prominent in the early 1980’s. These refugee programs for Afghan families rapidly declined after 2001 in the post 9/11 era (Margesson, 2007). Many Afghan refugees on September 11th, 2001 had expected to make the trip to America but ended up waiting extensive amounts of time, even years, after the terrorist attacks before they could be reevaluated for entrance into the U.S. (Redden, 2004). This

illustrates a very sharp shift of the perception of what it meant to be a refugee in America and how people from the Middle East were treated as unwelcome strangers. Skodo (2017) explains this cultural and political shift in American society stating, “when it comes to being a refugee, your nationality really matters.”

Preconceptions and perceptions of this “legitimacy” in refugees, or even the acknowledgment of refugee crises such as in Afghanistan have a lot to do with American perception and construction of who the “enemy” was after 9/11. Brathwaite and Moorthy (2016) analyzed refugees for the years 1951–2008 and the process through which states decide what refugees to host and which to decline. Their study showed a “strong support for our predictions that a country is likely to receive refugees fleeing its rivals and is reluctant to accept refugees originating from its contiguous allies” (Brathwaite & Moorthy, 2016, p. 11). States that see refugees as victims persecuted by an enemy state are far more likely to accept these exiled peoples into their country. Americans do not perceive Afghans as from an allied nation, nor as victims fleeing from an enemy- rather they are seen as encompassing the enemy. This is further proof of how far away American perception is from seeing Afghan refugees as legitimate refugees or victims of crimes against humanity. Afghans are perceived as neither from an allied state nor a people's fleeing a country of the enemy. The crisis is simply invisible to most Americans.

Although perceptions of Middle Eastern refugees lack a humanity element in representation in American media and politics, there is still hope. Perceptions on Middle Eastern refugees and inclusion are subject to generational differences of opinion. Shibley Telhami discusses statistical differences in age, party affiliation, and ambivalent moral responsibility Americans perceive to have toward the various Middle Eastern refugee crises. Sixty-eight percent of

millennials claimed they were supportive of taking in refugees from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries, assuming there were security screenings. There was also a difference between party lines, with 77 percent of Democrats expressing openness toward accepting refugees- compared to 56 percent of Independent voters and 38 percent of Republicans (Telhami, 2016). But while most Americans believe the U.S. played a part in creating the current refugee crisis, it has not translated to a sense of moral obligation to welcome Middle Eastern refugees into America (Dews & Snodgrass, 2016).

There is much to be said about this disjunction between consciousness and sense of moral obligation. Americans seem to be divided in their perceptions of Afghan refugees. This is due to a number of things, including media portrayal (or lack thereof), the creation of the “Muslim” terrorist, our lack of responsibility in our own political interferences, and the fear of depletion in the economic and social systems that might occur in the United States (Karasapan, 2017).

Racial Role in Casting Choices

Race has a huge impact on our everyday lives and heavily influences the choices casting directors make when it comes to what the end project looks like. Racial representation and the whiteness of program content have shown to be problematic for marginalized groups. One franchise that is actively resisting and criticizing marginalized group underrepresentation in movies is the *Fast and Furious* series. The films include characters of many different cultural backgrounds, “a cast that [reflects] the reality of our country’s racial makeup” (Lee, Stack, & Sullivan, 2015). Given these films’ global box office yield of \$2.4 billion (Lee, et al. 2015), one may assume that a more diverse cast will yield better business upon a movie’s release. A study conducted by Nina Terrero for UCLA’s Hollywood Diversity Report concludes that, in 2013, movies with a diverse cast made up of at

least 41% nonwhites made over \$50 billion more at the global box office than movies with casts made up of 10% or less nonwhites (Terrero, 2015). Box office success does not define the quality of a movie, but it does define the popularity of a movie or series; and movies that are more popular will make more money, so it is in the producers' best interest to make casting decisions with diversity in mind. One will notice that many of the modern American stars and heroes are still white and producers will create casts with some non-whites, but nowhere near the true racial complexity that is seen in America today (Lee, et al. 2015). Casting directors will cast one or a few non-white actors just to mark the diversity box off the checklist for a project, not thinking about actually portraying a true version of the American racial demographics.

This racial representation dysfunction may stem from the idea of in-group and outgroup as discussed by Weaver (2011). Weaver explains how, "audiences may be motivated to select content featuring same-race characters either because of a perception that such content will portray the in-group in a positive way (social identity theory) or because of a simple preference for characters similar to themselves (social cognitive theory)" (2011, p. 371). This thinking can be applied to the creation of media when the creator or controller of the media, in this case the producer, wants to portray their own in-group on screen. Since Hollywood studio heads were found to be 94% white (Hollywood diversity report, 2015), a large majority of people that belong to the in-group that ends up on screen make the bottom-line decisions for the film medium. This in-group may create for other groups but risk portraying the outgroup incorrectly, purposefully or not. This overwhelmingly lopsided representation of race, both on and off screen, only perpetuates the hegemonic nature of American media as well as the society at large.

In addition to the whiteness in representation, American media and society must

deal with and acknowledge the systemic racism that plagues daily life. Alan Frutkin (1998) discusses black TV dramas and the racism that keeps them off air with the, "perception among many black artists that there is institutional—even if perhaps unintentional—racism in the network TV business in general" (p. 28). The notion that racism may not even be a conscious choice is unsettling, to say the least, and shows just how ingrained racism is in American culture. Frutkin goes on to explain TV studios' as being unsupportive of black dramas and claims, "that programming is still created by and for whites" (1998, p. 28). Despite the data that supports a multicultural cast as more profitable (Terrero, 2015), media gatekeepers such as television and film studio heads refuse to capitalize on the opportunity and continue to cast white actors in support of their own in-group because, "White audiences higher in prejudice, then, would be less interested in seeing films with mostly Black casts because such films, in their mind, would likely elevate the outgroup relative to the in-group" (Weaver, 2011).

Role of Stereotypes and Relevance to Afghan and Iranian Refugee Portrayals

Stereotypes have been a part of western culture forever, which means that it is impossible to create a portrayal of a group without potentially triggering a stereotype of that group (Gorham, 2013). Triggering a stereotype then, "[gives] viewers an example that helps reinforce the majority's dominance" (Gorham, 2013, p. 23). This becomes the question of whether to subscribe to stereotypes in order to develop a character more efficiently or to take more screen time and develop that same character by different means. Storytelling taps into the psychology of the audience and storytellers know this and consciously, or unconsciously, make detail decisions to make a point as effectively as possible. This can sometimes negatively or positively

stereotype a group, marginalizing everybody associated with that group.

Jaideep Singh (2010) explores the public discourse of religion and the notion of “the so-called Muslim terrorist.” Western media depicts the “prototypical terrorist” as wearing, “turbans and beards, as well as dark complexions” (Singh, 2010, p. 117). This depiction dangerously places a large portion of the American population into the terrorist box, which perpetuates the idea of the dominant culture’s supremacy. Audiences often automatically perceive stereotypes as outlined by Srividya Ramasubramanian in her article on the reduction of stereotypes in news stories (Ramasubramanian, 2007). The audience is not always aware of the activation of the portrayed stereotype (Ramasubramanian, 2007). This can be extremely dangerous due to how media portrayals affect real life feelings toward marginalized groups.

Furthermore, exposure to TV messages negatively portraying Muslims affects Muslims’ feelings toward themselves as those messages can alter the viewer’s ideas about reality (Ibrahim & Halim, 2013). Ibrahim and Halim (2013) go on to explain that many Muslims watching news media feel unable to respond to negative discourse due to a devaluing of the Muslim point of view and an abrupt ending of the conversation.

Western hegemonic views represent all Muslims in a negative light and do not allow them to, in a sense, prove themselves innocent to the dominant group. In discussing a similar concept, Richard Dyer (1997) states that raced, or colored, people cannot speak on behalf of humanity as a whole, while non-raced, or white, people can. Due to their race being at the forefront of their identity, raced people can only speak for their racial group while whites can speak for anybody (Dyer, 1997). In the case above, Muslims may only be able to speak for—or to, for that matter—other Muslims about the negative discourse they see in news media, which does nothing to stop the

perpetuation of western essentialization of Muslims.

Some people are fighting back and creating content that portrays Muslims more accurately. National Public Radio’s Alex Cohen (2011) catalogs the 2010 film, *MOOZ-lum*, and its creators’ attempts at breaking through Hollywood to depict Muslim characters outside of their stereotypical roles.

Applying real world scenarios to anti-stereotypical characters will allow any content producer to create multidimensional characters that allow the audience to see people in marginalized groups as fellow humans, breaking down many destructive western ideals that dominate modern American media.

Media Literacy and the Representation of Refugees in the Media

With our media project, we engage the refugee crisis, specifically focusing on Afghan and Iranian refugees. We chose the media construction project format because we want our audience to watch stories of refugees and to empathize with them. We are creating a six-part mini-series to highlight unseen refugee experiences, with the goal of evoking an emotional response from the audience. Manifesting this project into a miniseries is the best way for us to accomplish the following goals: (a) break down stereotypes surrounding refugees (b) paint a more accurate portrait of the refugee populations (c) improve mainstream portrayal of refugees and (d) to bring an aspect of humanity to refugees. By using video as our medium, we feel as though our content will be more likely to be consumed, as opposed to sharing our stories via news articles, books, or podcasts. The characters in our episodes include a lesbian young woman, a male medical student, a middle-aged basketball player, a young girl, and a Christian pastor. We created these characters with intersectionality in mind in an effort to paint a more colorful portrait of Iranian and Afghan

refugees. To bring meaning and validity to this project, this paper will cover the topic of media literacy and why it matters, how viewers read media content for its social and political function, what viewers read about refugees and how they're represented (or not represented), and the relevance of symbolic annihilation in relation to the issue.

Media Literacy

Kellner and Share give importance to the development in media literacy by stating that, "media representations help construct our images and understanding of the world..." (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 370). This project is especially important for our time because there are very limited stories being told about refugees. From these stories, generalizations are made about refugees. People receiving this information are "not often aware that they are being educated and constructed by media culture..." (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372). In order to gain a clearer view of the world and marginalized groups, a critical approach to media is necessary (Kellner & Share, 2005). This is why media literacy is important.

Strate (2014) takes the concept of media literacy further and correlates media ethics with media literacy, stating that one cannot exist without the other. "There is a moral obligation on the part of media organizations to ensure that media audiences can decode their messages accurately, interpret them appropriately, and most important of all, evaluate them critically" (Strate, 2014, p. 101). Media literacy "helps people to use media intelligently, to discriminate and evaluate media content, to critically dissect media forms, to investigate media effects and uses, and to construct alternative media" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 372). This project's aim is that as viewers watch the miniseries, our messages about Iranian and Afghan refugees that portray them as intersectional humans will cause viewers to

question media that they've previously been presented with.

Viewers and Content

Deng, Lee, Li, and Lin (2013) coin the term "new media literacy" in reference to our digital age. Digital technology is a part of almost every aspect of our lives (Deng, Lee, Li & Lin, 2013). Dezuanni (2015) specifies digital media as being non-written forms of media such as, "film, television, print media, radio, video games, online and mobile media and the increasing convergence among these" (p. 417). "These new technologies make the media even more significant and influential than ever in human history" (Deng, Lee, Li & Lin, 2013, p. 160). With these emergent sources of news information "traditional literacy is no longer sufficient for an individual to competently survive in this new media ecology" (Deng, Lee, Li & Lin, 2013, p. 161). When traditional media literacy is not enough, how then, is a layperson, who isn't media literate to start with, find a truthful message? It is our goal with the miniseries to present a narrative that is transparent in its presentation of our message so that even the viewers that are not media literate, will see the differences between our miniseries' messaging and the media's messaging.

Media Representations

The function of media representations is that "mass media play an important role in the creation and distribution of ideologies, and thereby contribute to the overall cultural production of knowledge" (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016, p. 221). Ahmed and Matthes (2016) also go on to state that mass media depicts ideologies and developments as well as dominant social values, and that this often leads to "misrepresentation or stereotypical portrayals of minorities in the media (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016). According to Bleich, Bloemraad, and Graauw (2015) media representations are important to us because:

(i) The media provide a source of information about groups or issues related to migration and diversity; (ii) the media convey or construct particular representations of minorities and immigrants, including negative depictions; and (iii) the media act as a space for the participation of migrants and minorities in a public sphere where they can advance their interests and identities (p. 859).

According to Satchel (2017) “media producers’ realities and ideologies inform social knowledge construction and shape what become cultural norms and values” (p. 29). Bleich, Blowraad and Graauw (2017) claimed that media is a source of information, and Ahmed and Matthes (2016) articulated that media could also construct representations of minorities. Representations of minorities in the media are important to understand and critique. Discerning the strategic message from a truthful message should always be in the audience’s mind. Discovering media representations that portray a group in a false light should then help the media consumer find what the truth is. If one understands the crafted message, then one will have an easier time finding and discerning an authentic one.

Refugee Media Representation

Media offers a representation of white supremacy that usually depicts minorities as “a problem or threat, and mostly in association with crime, violence, conflict, unacceptable cultural differences, or other forms of deviance” (Van Dijk, 1991, p. 21). The media consistently links Afghan and Iranian refugees to Islam. The dominant white groups in western culture categorize Muslims as ‘them’ and are shown as a threat to ‘us’ (Osuir and Banderjee, 2004). When included in media rhetoric, Afghan and Iranian refugees are linked almost always with Islamic terrorism. Western media consumers learn about refugees as a generalized group, homogenous in their culture and religious beliefs. There are no individualized

stories of the refugee families. Most of the media representation surrounding Iranian and Afghan refugees involves death and/or violence. And in those stories, there is no call to action, only coverage of the violence and consequences involved. These stories show western peoples that refugees bring violence and turmoil.

Symbolic Annihilation

Symbolic annihilation is the absence of representation of some group of people in the media. Allen (2010) defines the sphere of invisibility as events and issues that rarely figure into news content; in our case this is Iranian and Afghan refugees. News content itself presents a narrow representation of refugees and generalizes the entire group of refugees into stereotypes. Tsftati (2007) claims that “minority perceptions of the strong influence of biased media coverage may indirectly lead to increased minority alienation” (p. 632). In light of this project, this study is relevant to our oppressed majority in relation to the rest of the world.

Currently, there aren’t many countries that are open to accepting refugees. Closed border countries, like the United States, either don’t talk about the ongoing refugee crisis, or refugees are painted in an undesirable way via the media. If they are seen as undesirable or threatening to the public, then they will not be welcomed into a new home. It’s in this way, that the world has increased refugee alienation. This project adds to the narrative of alienated persons because Iranian and Afghan refugees are not alienated by a specific country, but by most countries.

Conclusion

Based on this research and collection of studies, our project will address the clear need for a different kind of refugee story. A media project is the best way to tackle this issue and achieve our goals. In order to change the media

landscape surrounding Iranian and Afghan refugees, we feel as though we must create content that alters that landscape. By adding our stories about Iranian and Afghan refugees in Greece, we are creating media that adds to and alters the constructed norm surrounding this topic. The intersectional stories we create with the six-part miniseries will highlight refugees as individual humans, instead of grouping them together and erasing their distinct cultures. Media literacy is important in accomplishing this, since we as the project producers need to stay constantly critical of the work we do, and keep our conditioned biases in check. Through our creation of a new type of message, we also hope to influence the way viewers interact with media content by providing a message so prolific that it causes viewers to question what they've seen before. We aim to expand the types of messages shown about refugees and work against the symbolic annihilation that occurs through traditional messages typically shown about refugees. This project should ultimately challenge the perceptions of refugees that Western culture has seen up to this point.

Casting and Background

ACTRESS: *Nazanin Boniadi*

Nazanin Boniadi was born in Tehran, Iran in the height of the revolution. She was raised in London, England and later moved to the U.S. to attend university. She is a British-American. She graduated with Honors from the University of California Irvine, where she received a Bachelor's Degree in Biological Sciences. Fluent in both English and Farsi. She is a human rights activist and served a spokesperson for Amnesty International USA from 2009 until 2015. She continues to partner with the organization as an Artist of Conscience. She joined the Board of Directors at the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran in October 2015.

CHARACTER: *Atisheh Dariush*

Atisheh Dariush is a 30-year-old Iranian refugee, gay in her sexual orientation though this is only mentioned in flashbacks and is not the dominant force of her identity. The audience recognize the character's sexuality, but it will only contribute to her story as part of intersectionality. She is an accomplished female divorce lawyer, which is a growing problem in Iran and is a very disliked profession by the community.

ACTOR: *Bobby Naderi*

Bobby Naderi was born in Tehran, Naderi had a cultured childhood having been raised between Iran, Europe, Canada and the U.S. Bobby by sheer chance found his way into the Arts in his early 20s which led him to study with Judith Weston then began working on stage and the indie film. He gained notice for his lead role in Sundance Festival Hit! "The Taqwacores" which he received high praise for his performance. Naderi had a Supporting role in Nina Menkes Sundance film "Phantom Love" and a part in Ben Affleck's Oscar winning "Argo". Bobby continues to study the craft. *Speaks fluent Persian and English.

CHARACTER: *Chamran Raouf*

Raouf, born on Feb. 20, 1980 in Tehran, Iran came to Greece with his wife, Zenab. He was a professional athlete on the Iranian National Basketball team. He studied economics at the University of Tehran and hopes to leave Greece and reach the London in order to work in the field. His wife, who is fluent in Persian and English, teaches him English and hopes to work in the Embassy of Iran in London. The couple have been at the refugee camp for three months and recently met Farhad Naseri. Naseri has been at the camp longer so he is able to help them with life in the camp as the couple attempts to keep him hopeful for his own escape. Chamran loses faith in himself as he struggles to learn English and forms doubts about ever leaving. He does not tell his wife about

his doubts because he does not want to let her down. Personality: outwardly stoic, internally emotional, lacks a sense of humor.

ACTOR: *Shervin Alenabi*

Shervin was born in Iran in 1995. He, along with his family immigrated to the UK in 2007. Wanting to continue acting, he learned to speak English and adapted the accent by watching and recording popular teen English films and television shows, such as *Skins* (2007). He is fluent in both Kurdish and Persian. Because of his age and Kurdish background, he is very similar in that sense to the character, Farhad Naseri. It is very important to emphasize the hardships and experiences that young male Iranian refugee men have to go through as they make the journey to Greece and northern European countries alone. Shervin's physical characteristics and linguistic abilities will be able to capture Farhad's personality and character perfectly.

CHARACTER: *Farhad Naseri*

Farhad was born in Tehran, Iran on March 27, 1994. His family consists of his mother, father, older brother, and younger sister. His childhood was hard, especially since his family is Kurdish- a minority group in Iran. Growing up, Islam was a huge part of his culture and family life. It was something that was never questioned, but expected to be a part of daily life. Up until he fled to Greece, he faithfully followed the Islamic religion.

As a young boy, he always had high aspirations for his future, and has strived to become a doctor ever since. However, because of his ethnicity, he faced a lot of political persecution. Even though he received top marks in school, he was never able to pursue higher education in medical school because of his Kurdish background. Because of this, his family decided to send him to Northern Europe to obtain a medical degree. He traveled from Iran to Turkey, then fled on a boat to

the Greek islands, where he finally landed in Athens. He has been alone throughout this entire journey and is adamant on finding a job so that he can send money back to his family.

Presently, he is in a Greek refugee camp, and has started to lose hope in leaving this country. He experiences waves of loneliness, but also conviction to take charge of his future. He has been there for the past 10 months, and during this time has gone to church and became a Christian. It was extremely hard telling his family this, but unlike many other families that would disown or persecute their Christian relatives, they have been supportive and loving.

ACTOR: *Fahim Fazli*

Fahim Fazli was born on May 30, 1966 in Kabul, Afghanistan. Fahim Fazli came to the United States when he was a teenager in order to escape the oppression and violence of the Russians. In his youth, prior to seeking refuge in the United States, he supported the resistance in Afghanistan. He came to California and pursued a successful acting career after his education. From 2009-2010 he decided to become an interpreter for the U.S. Marines as a way to give back and to support the resistance in Afghanistan. After his service, he wrote a book called *Fahim Speaks* which won first place for a biography from the Military Writers Society of America".

CHARACTER: *Pastor Muhammad Koushani*

Pastor Muhammad Koushani was a practicing pastor of a non-denominational church in Afghanistan. When the violence became too unbearable, he and his family fled to Greece to seek refuge. After overcoming the trauma, he endured, he continued his ministry in the refugee camps. He invited all Muslims into a welcoming space and invited healing from all religions in the camps. After some years of waiting he was granted asylum but gave up his spot to continue his

ministry. He made the decision to separate from his family in order to give them a better future.

ACTRESS: *Kinza Fahad*

Kinza Fahad is an Afghan child actress. She previously starred on a popular Middle Eastern show “Tumhare Siwa” as one of the main character’s daughter. Due to her being a minor, there is not much information about Kinza. She has an existing Facebook page titled “Kinza Fahad Child Star” with clips and photos of her from the show “Tumhare Siwa” as well as other appearances at talk shows and with fans. It is not known if she has any experience with the refugee crisis. She is often described as “sweet” by her fans, and has experience playing the daughter of two feuding parents.

CHARACTER: *Nafisa Kabir*

Nafisa Kabir is a 10-year-old from Afghanistan. She lives with her mother and father until they find refuge in Greece, where her mother leaves their family due to differing religious ideologies. Through the flee to Greece and her parents’ separation, Nafisa is struggling to be a child when so much of her past experiences have challenged her to be an adult. She and her brother try to make home in Eleonas while having flashbacks of their life in Afghanistan.

Changing the Media Landscape

This six part mini-series will alter the dominant media landscape of the U.S. by highlighting the realistic and humanistic stories of refugees in the Eleonas Refugee Camp. By making the stories dynamic, relatable, and full of life, they will give more understanding to those who have faced this specific systemic oppression and displacement. By creating content that focuses on their intersectional identities, this show will portray the refugees as more wholesome, competent, and personable human beings that otherwise are symbolically annihilated from media

representation in the United States. Our current political and cultural contexts need to be disrupted and readdressed, especially in light of islamophobia, the Muslim Ban, terrorism, and the refugee crisis.

Media representations help construct our understanding of the world (Kellner and Share, 2005). Our project is especially important for our time because we have limited stories being told about refugees, and many are based on stereotypes. Our audience, the general American public, is not usually aware that they are being influenced and educated via the media culture (Kellner and Share, 2005). Kellner and Share also articulate that in order to gain a clearer view of the world and of marginalized groups, a critical approach is necessary, hence where media literacy comes into play. Strate (2014) also argues that as content creators, we have a moral obligation to ensure that our audience is able to decode the messages accurately and evaluate them critically. Hence, media literacy is important for both us as the miniseries content creators, but it’s also important for us to keep in mind as an audience consuming media.

American perception of refugees from the Middle East severely shifted after the 9/11 attacks. By way of media representation, there was a new vision and construction of the terrorist. This prototype was used to fuel the marginalization and blatant racism towards these individuals, and it was seen as essential and necessary to safety. The conflation of physical attributes, nationalities, and Islamic extremism created a triple layer of othering, working to enforce and reinforce one another as a cohesive representation of terrorist to the American public (Skodo, 2017). This conflation works to essentialize these people as violent barbarians, with terrorism as a natural byproduct of who they are (Crews, 2016). This construction of essentializing terrorism to a certain demographic is dangerous, and explains American indifference and lack of attention or understanding of the refugee

crises in the Middle East. Crews (2016) says that labeling these entire nationalities and their religion as producers of terrorism makes it easier to turn a blind eye to their suffering, or shift the blame of these refugee crises back onto the countries that are violently torn. In addition, the perception of legitimacy of refugees largely is influenced by media framing. There is a “strong support for our predictions that a country is likely to receive refugees fleeing its rivals and is reluctant to accept refugees originating from its contiguous allies” (Brathwaite & Moorthy, 2016, p. 11). This indicates that Americans who see refugees as victims persecuted by an enemy state are far more likely to be accepted into the country. Americans do not perceive Afghans or Iranians as from an allied nation, nor as victims fleeing from an enemy; rather, they are seen as encompassing the enemy, essentialized in terrorism. This is further proof of how far away American perception is from seeing these refugees as legitimate refugees or victims of crimes against humanity. Afghans are perceived as neither from an allied state nor a people's fleeing a country of the enemy. The crisis is simply invisible to most Americans, and so are the people and the lives they lead. Our mini-series' purpose is to re-evaluate these connotations and stereotypes with in nationalities, religion, and terrorism. The first step in this process must be to re-humanize these refugees as dynamic, complicated, ambitious, interesting human beings with past lives.

In Western media, Afghan and Iranian people are essentialized as radical Islamic terrorists, a threat to the United States and Europe, or victims in need of saving. In regard to Afghan refugees fleeing the country, the media reduced their extraordinary events into “visual wallpaper” (Wright, 2004, p. 101). They are framed within the American and British narratives, resulting in poor reports of refugees (Wright, 2004). By having to rely on others to report their stories and messages, the voices of the refugees remain in the framework of a reporter (Wright,

2004). The media has also used binary opposites to construct a specific image of Iranians. By using loaded words in several headlines during the Iranian Hostage Crisis, these people have been reduced to demonized stereotypes (New, 2001). They are only seen as being intolerant and turning to radical Islamic violence in opposition to Western liberty and freedom (New, 2001). Rather than focus on Iran's historical experiences of experimentation with democracy, the usage of specific photos of women wearing black chadors only perpetuates the stereotype of Islam's anti-liberal nature (Fayyaz & Shirazi, 2013). Refugees have been constrained into small boxes, disregarding their intersectional identities, through the events that the media highlights. By showing photos of victimized women and children, or an Afghan man with a gun, the media is perpetuating and supporting stereotypes to gain viewership, even if there are more complicated stories behind the images (Guerrero & Tinkler, 2010; Wright, 2004; Cloud, 2004; Rane, Ewart, & Martinkus, 2014). This problem of essentialism, reductionism, demonization, and stereotyping is immense and pervasive. There needs to be a shift in the way that media represents this marginalized group.

Taking into account the current media portrayals of Middle Eastern refugees and, as Gorham (2013) states, that stereotypes can be triggered automatically and unknowingly, this project hopes to subvert the current landscape and replace it with a more accurate one. This new media landscape will sidestep the perpetuation of discriminatory sentiments toward refugees. By casting Afghan and Iranian actors to portray the show's characters, Eleonas seeks to break down the dominant western ideals that infiltrate daily life. Casting Afghan and Iranian actors allows us as creators to depict whole truth, and Cohen (2011) argues that Muslims want true portrayals in media, not false portrayals, positive or negative. False and dangerous perspectives have become banal for the common American media consumer due to a

desire to elevate one's in-group relative to the outgroup (Weaver, 2011). Casting and portraying Afghan and Iranian characters serves as a challenge

when marketing to an American audience, but we strive to create non-stereotypical roles, highlighting the humanity and dynamics of the characters and the groups they represent.

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